Westerham Valley Railway

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WESTERHAM VALLEY RAILWAY

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PREFACE

The Westerham Valley Railway achieved fame only in its last couple of years, when it was the subject of an amazingly high-handed official decision to close it against the wishes of a substantial number of local people; and then in the two or three years after closure, when a Railway Association tried unsuccessfully to get the line reopened. Therefore, before the railway becomes completely forgotten, I thought I should put its rather sad little history on record.

It is only fitting that this book should be dedicated to the Promoters of the Westerham Valley Railway Company, and to all those gentlemen who were members of the Westerham Valley Railway Association's Committee.

Grateful thanks are due to Mr. R. W. Kidner, who since 1965 has always patiently answered my many questions about the Southern Railway in the 1930's. Long before the general enthusiasm for branch line railways, he found them interesting, and photographed the Westerham line on several occasions from 1930 onwards.

I should also like to acknowledge the assistance of Messrs. Thomas Burnham, A.C. Mombrun, and John Price.

Lingfield, 1973. D.G.

"I know of no place in the world that wants a Railway more than Westerham." ---- Sir Edward Watkin (attributed).

CONSTRUCTION AND OPENING.

Great excitement abounded in the little town of Westerham on Wednesday, 6th July, 1881. The event for which everyone had been waiting for the past five years was actually to happen on that very day – the opening of the new railway from the South Eastern Railway's main line at Dunton Green to Westerham.

Westerham had needed a railway for many years, but although the South Eastern had obtained powers for construction in 1864, 1867 and 1870, nothing had been done. Well aware of the advantages that rail communication would bring to the town, and tired of waiting for the S.E.R. to make up its mind over the matter, several local worthies promoted a Bill in 1876. Among those behind it were Joseph Kitchin, hop grower and farmer; R. Durtnell; E. Dye, Royal Farmers' Insurance agent; W. Fox; and Dr. Charles Robert Thompson. One of the chief promoters, a prominent Brasted landowner named William Tipping, had underwritten a sizeable part of the sum of £50,000 to enable the Bill to be promoted.

The description of the proposed line was similar in most respects to that of the S.E.R.'s original 1864 Bill: Railway No. 1 was to run from Dunton Green via Brasted to Westerham, and Railway No. 2 from Westerham to Oxted, where it would join the Croydon & Oxted line (which was at that time lying uncompleted and derelict).

The promoters of the Westerham Valley Railway were anxious to keep on good terms with the South Eastern, but an impasse had been reached. Unless they abandoned their idea to link Westerham with Oxted, the South Eastern would refuse to have anything to do with the scheme.

So, at the House of Commons Session of 22nd March 1876, the promoters put their case for the passing of the Westerham Valley Railway Bill. At the start of the Session, the terms were laid down: that the promoters withdraw Railway No. 2; the S.E.R. to provide plant and rolling stock and undertake to work and maintain Railway No. 1 at fifty per cent of gross receipts. The S.E.R. had in fact guaranteed to the W.V.R. a minimum toll of £2,500 a year.

The engineer, John William Grover, of Victoria Chambers, Westminster, was asked to give details of the proposed line. He stated that it was four miles forty-five chains long, and declared that his worst gradient was 1 in 70 and his worst curve 18 chains radius. He estimated the cost at £46,358.

Mr. Shiress Will then cross-examined John Cattle, a Westerham nurseryman.

"Are there any manufactories in Westerham?"

"There is a brewery – two breweries."

"There is a brewery in every village."

"No, there is not. Ours is a Town not a Village."

(One can almost hear the fierce pride in his voice!)

"Is it for the brewery that you want this railway?"

"The whole of the inhabitants want it too – the brewery of course want it."

The only landowner who opposed the scheme, W. J. Tonge, was at the Session to put *his* case. He had not opposed the 1864 Bill, and when asked why not, he maintained that he did not reckon to oppose big railway companies. He owned some land about a mile from Dunton Green, and complained that its beauty would be spoilt, since the railway would sever it right in two.

Mr. Pope was cross-examining him.

"What damage will this line do you excepting as to severance?"

"It simply does this damage. I like my estate as a man might like his garden and it cuts my estate in two and spoils it. . . . I shall see the smoke of the engine from the time it starts from Dunton Green till it gets to Westerham."

"Do you really seriously think that that is a reason why Westerham should not have a railway, that if it has, you will see trains pass 1,000 yards off?"

"Yes, I think it is a great objection."

But, despite Mr. Tonge, the Bill was passed, with the expected modi - fications – namely, Railway No. 2 struck out.

It was not until 24th July 1876 that the Westerham Valley Railway Company was incorporated, by 39-40 Vic. c. 166. Nothing more happened; then, under an Agreement dated 25 June 1879, the S.E.R. undertook to carry out construction, maintenance and eventual operation of the line.

Among the directors of the W.V.R. were those same men who had worked so hard to get the 1876 Bill passed: Dr. Thompson, William Tipping, and Lt.-Col. Charles Arthur Madan Warde – another prominent landowner. The Chairman of the company was the Rt. Hon. Edward Hugessen Knatchbull-Hugessen, and it is hardly surprising that Sir Edward William Watkin, Chairman of the S.E.R., was also a director of the W.V.R. Incidentally, Squire Tipping had originally come from Liverpool, where he had watched the construction of the Liverpool & Manchester Railway, and by 1876 had become a director of thirteen railway companies. It was recalled many years later that he was "tall, with a bald head and grey curls, whiskers and a Newgate frill, walking about wearing a square-topped hard felt hat." *

At last, work on the line's construction began in October 1879. The contractor was Charles Chambers, of Westminster Chambers, Victoria Street; as mentioned, J. Grover was the engineer. On leaving Dunton Green station – which had been opened in 1868 – the railway was to run west on a fairly straight and level course, with one intermediate station a

** The Times, 11 Aug. 1961.*

mile north of the village of Brasted, to a terminus at Westerham, only a short distance from the High Street. The branch line would be single throughout.

By February 1881, the almost-completed works were much delayed owing to heavy rains towards the end of the previous year. The contract sum was £65,000, but it was no doubt due to the delays, and the fact that the soil proved very treacherous, being wet and marshy, that the actual cost of the railway amounted to some £70,000. It was generally agreed that it would be only a matter of time before the line would be continued on to Oxted, but this never happened. Although it would have entailed only four additional miles, gradients would have been severe and engineering works heavy.

Westerham prepared to welcome the railway. On the morning of the 6th July 1881, the streets and approaches were being gaily arrayed with flags of all colours. No visitor would have been left in any doubt as to the reason: at the entrance to the town was a handsome triumphal arch composed of evergreen and decorated with flags, on one side of which was written in white letters on a red background, "Success to the Railway", and on the other side. "Onward", this being the motto of the South Eastern Railway. The King's Arms Hotel displayed a large quantity of bunting, and the frontage of the Town Hall was festooned with flags.

The South Eastern was only too well noted for its exorbitant fares, but just for that day all this was forgotten, and the Company very generously put on a special service of free trains. The first special left Westerham at 12.0 noon for Brasted and Dunton Green and back again, conveying Westerham local schoolchildren and teachers; then at 1.30 p.m. and 3.0 p.m. further trains for the use of the general public were run. It is recorded that at half past one, the celebrated Tunbridge Wells Parade Band gave a fine selection of music on the Green.

There could hardly have been greater excitement if Royalty itself were to visit the town, but it was that revered personality, the Chairman of the South Eastern, Sir Edward Watkin himself, who was on that particular day Westerham's most distinguished guest. At 4.10 p.m., a special train conveying the Chairman and Myles Fenton, the general manager, accompanied by the Directors, departed from Charing Cross for Westerham. On arrival the party alighted and, escorted by the Parade Band playing at full blast, went to the Town Hall, where a grand banquet awaited the honoured guests.

Sir Edward Watkin took the chair. He proposed the toast of the Queen, followed by the Prince and Princess of Wales, and the rest of the Royal Family. Next came the turn of the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Clergy and Ministers of all denominations.

The Chairman, whose mood had by now become positively euphoric, then gave "The Landowners", singling out for special mention the kindly and generous Lieutenant-Colonel Warde, who had done so much for the

promotion of the line. The Colonel replied that although he knew that some landowners felt that a railway going through their land was damaging, and was regarded with a certain amount of fear, there were other ways of looking at it. He was so confident that the new railway would be a benefit to himself and his neighbours that he had done everything he could to get it advanced, and opined that its completion was in a great measure due to Sir Edward Watkin.

Dr. Thompson said he could remember Westerham in the days when the only communication with the Metropolis was a daily stage coach, which started from the King's Arms at eight in the morning and reached the Borough at eleven, arriving back in Westerham at seven in the evening. Now that the railway was open, the townspeople could look forward to a new era of prosperity; farmers in the district would be able to get their produce conveyed by rail at the same rates as other hitherto more favoured people, and to compete in the London and other markets with their rivals.

Some far-sighted people looked to the day when Westerham would become a suburb of London, as the train service would make it possible for businessmen, or, to use the language of the time, "gentlemen who were busied in London," to live in Westerham, and travel daily to Town.

A firework display on Westerham Common was a colourful way of completing what had been a momentous day; it was reported that "such a magnificent pyrotechnical display has not before been seen in Westerham or its vicinity. During this the Westerham New Town Band played a selection of appropriate music." *

Regular train services commenced on the following day, Thursday 7th July 1881, and this is always stated as being the opening day, since the previous day's "opening" was really of a ceremonial nature. The initial timetable showed a balanced service of eleven up and down trains on weekdays, with eight each way on Sundays. These trains ran only between Dunton Green and Westerham and, as the South Eastern had no intention of stopping its best trains at Dunton Green, Westerham line passengers had to change into "stoppers" up to London, the journey to Charing Cross (via Cannon Street) taking nearly 1½ hours for the 25¼ miles. Admittedly it was an improvement on the stage coach, but it was hardly breathtaking. Also, not all branch trains had a connection with London services, and at first one had to leave Charing Cross as early as 7.28 p.m. for the last connection to Westerham. However, from September it was possible to leave at 8.30 p.m. to connect with an additional branch train which arrived at Westerham at 9.35 p.m. A further improvement, from November 1881, was a late night train on Wednesdays only, leaving Charing Cross at 11.40 p.m., with a connection enabling the passenger to

* *Sevenoaks Chronicle, 8th July 1881.*

be in Westerham at 12.46 midnight. This meant that the branch service now had thirteen down trains but still only 11 up. The Sunday service was evidently found to be too lavish, as from November it was reduced to five trains each way, and here annoyance must have been caused locally because while two up trains which had no connection at Dunton Green were kept on, two that did connect were taken out! All trains were shown as accommodating three classes – first, second and Parliamentary.

Originally there was a one-engine shed at Westerham, regarded as a sub-shed of Tonbridge. As some rebuilt "Folkestone" class 2-4-0 locomotives were shedded at Tonbridge, it is possible that they appeared on the branch in its first decade of life.

All the equipment used by the contractor for the line's construction was auctioned at Dunton Green and Brasted in November 1881. It included one Hunslet 13" cyl. 0-6-0T, one Manning Wardle 8" cyl. 0-4-0T, 200 tons of flat bottom rails, a large quantity of tip wagons, a 6-hp portable steam engine by Davey, Paxton of Colchester, and various offices and temporary buildings.

THE FIRST FORTY YEARS.

With the line now open, the Westerham Valley Railway Company was dissolved and outright ownership transferred to the South Eastern. This was done by an Act of Parliament (44 and 45 Vict. c 195), which received the Royal Assent on 11 August 1881.

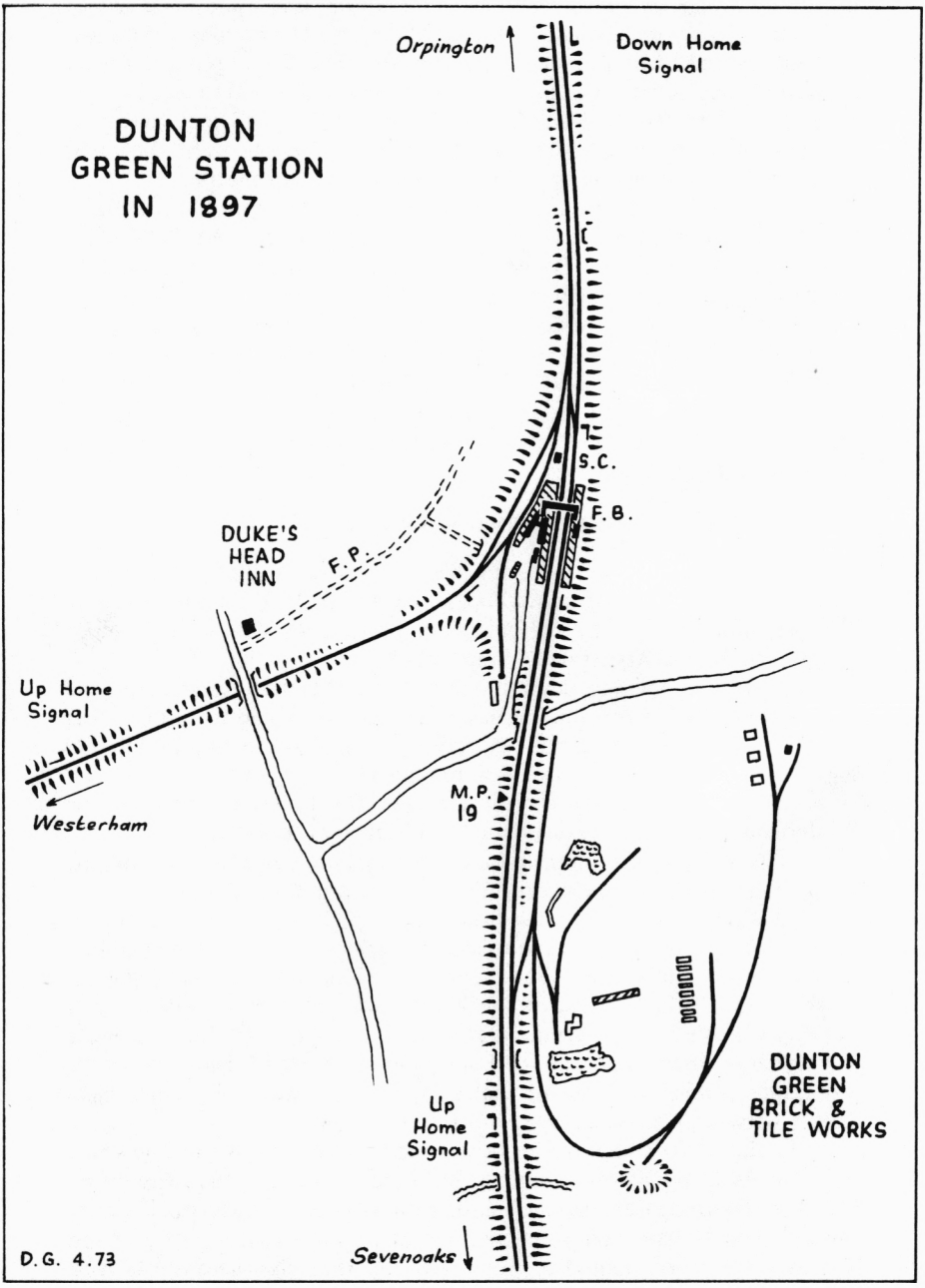
From the opening day, the single fares between Westerham and Dunton Green were fixed at 1s 3d for first class, and 7½d for third – that is, a rate of 3d and 1½d a mile respectively. It is an astounding fact that in eighty years, the third class fare rose to only 1s 1d.

In the 1880's, Cheap Day tickets were issued every Wednesday from Westerham and Sevenoaks to London, available by certain trains.

Gibson Thompson, in his guide-book to Westerham and its surrounds, *Wolfeland,* had this to say about the railway during this period:–

"Leaving the metropolis from Charing Cross, Cannon Street or London Bridge, one journeys to this uncut gem of Nature by the main line of the South Eastern Rly. as far as Dunton Green, and thence a 'change' is made to the little toy line of the Westerham Valley Rly., which has a station at Brasted and its terminus at Westerham, and which looks forward to extending itself, some day, to Limpsfield and Oxted." The same writer was rather surprised to record that a carrier's cart was still plying twice-weekly between Westerham and Spur Inn, Borough.

In the 1890's, the motive power for the branch was the Cudworth "118" class 2-4-0 dating from 1859. Some of these locos were to be found at Tonbridge engine shed during the period. Carriage stock would almost certainly have comprised four-wheelers, since at this time even the best South Eastern trains had nothing better than six-wheeled carriages,


DUNTON
GREEN STATION
IN 1897
Orpington
Down Home
Signal
S.C.
F.B.
DUKE'S
HEAD
INN
F.P.
Up Home
Signal
Westerham
M.P.
19
Up
Home
Signal
Sevenoaks
DUNTON
GREEN
BRICK &
TILE WORKS
D.G. 4.73

though a few flat-roofed bogie coaches had been built.

Just south of Dunton Green station, on the down side of the main line, there existed the Dunton Green Brick and Tile Works. It had, by 1897, its own internal railway system, which was connected to the S.E.R. by a trailing crossover, and was worked by an Aveling & Porter 2-2-0TG (No. 1740 of 1882). This machine was scrapped in 1927. There is now no trace of the brickworks, and the site is covered by a factory complex and the offices of the West Kent Cold Storage Co. The brickworks was shown on the Ordnance Survey First Edition 6 in. map (1868) but there was then no rail connection to the S.E.R.

In 1881, James Stirling had introduced the first of his Class Q 0-4-4T for suburban work, and in time these very useful little engines came to take over from the elderly Cudworths on Westerham Valley branch trains. From 1899 to the early part of 1906, the regular engine was No. 366, and was sub-shedded at Westerham. This had occasionally to be substituted by a Class 0 0-6-0, when the Q had to be stopped for repairs or overhaul.

Travelling conditions had gradually improved since the S.E.R. had joined its old rival the London Chatham & Dover Railway. Although separate directorates were retained, to the passenger the working union appeared to be a completely new railway. Coaching stock improved, and so did punctuality – in certain places. It seems likely that Westerham branch timekeeping was good. Passenger traffic was good, too, and justified the promoters' hopes. There was now even a through train to Cannon Street – the 8.40 a.m. from Westerham.

During the middle 1900's, all Britain's railway companies began to get concerned about the electric tramways which were sprouting up in cities and towns. In many places, these tramways were not limited to mere urban concerns, but joined up from town to town, sometimes across quite rural areas. The directors of the South Eastern & Chatham Railways Managing Committee were particularly alarmed by a proposal to extend a tramway from London along the Dover road to Gravesend and Chatham. The steam-worked rural branch line had already become expensive to operate, and a way was sought to combat rising costs, and to invent a type of train that came close to tramway practice. This was the steam railmotor, and as far as the S.E. & C.R. was concerned, a total of eight cars was built, each with a small detachable engine made by Kitson of Leeds, in 1905 and 1906.

Each car had a body 48 ft. 4 in. long, divided into three portions: a non-smoking saloon 19 ft. $10\frac{3}{8}$ in. long, a smoking saloon 14 ft. $10\frac{7}{8}$ in. long, and a compartment for luggage and guard, 6 ft. 8 in. long. Additionally, there was a vestibule at the locomotive end of the car. Sliding doors gave communication between passengers' and guard's compartments. The saloon interior was finished in teak. There were two doors at each end, and they opened inwards. Accommodation was for 3rd class passengers only.

From April of 1906, railmotors Nos. 3 and 7 worked all the branch passenger services, as well as trains between Otford and Sevenoaks. Wester-

ham's little engine shed closed down, though the ash pit was retained, and locomotives could still coal-up there. At the same time, the train service was slightly improved, with some extra trains and *two* through workings to Cannon Street in the morning, using ordinary carriage stock (see time-table). It was clear, however, that the railmotors were not at all speedy, since the journey time was increased from 10 to 14-16 minutes.

The railmotors did not last long, as there was apparently more traffic on the branch than the authorities had realised – a single coach was quite inadequate. They were supposed to be able to take a tail-load of one six-wheeled coach, but this was an operational nuisance. Anyway, over-crowding was such as to result in the speedy withdrawal of railmotors from the Westerham line, which reverted to Q class operation, with three-coach sets.

One result of the nation-wide use of railmotors was the opening of 'haltes' or halts, being simple platforms with a small hut for shelter, at which only railmotors called. Passengers had to buy their tickets off the guard. In this way a community could be rail-served at minimal cost, and perhaps the railway company could get back some passengers from the real – or imaginary – tramcars. The Westerham branch was one that gained a new halt – Chevening, opened on 16th April 1906. It was not too well placed, being midway between the villages of Chipstead and Chevening, but doubtless it was hoped that it would serve a fairly large catchment area. The halt was situated on the south side of the line, just west of the road overbridge, and consisted of a timber platform with a small shelter.

After the failure of the railmotors, ways were once again sought to reduce costs, and the Locomotive Superintendent, Harry Smith Wainwright, introduced the Class P 0-6-0T, a tiny engine and a very economical one. These engines were not at all powerful, but given a short train, they could cope quite successfully. Four still exist to this day on preserved lines.

No. 753 of this class, when new in 1909, was fitted for working "pull-and-push" or auto trains, and took over all Westerham services. The engine would be marshalled between two bogie coaches of L.C. & D.R. design. The fact that this was awkward when taking water from platform columns was of no consequence at Westerham, since the water column was situated by the engine shed, and when it was necessary to take water, engine and coaches shunted from the platform on arrival from Dunton Green, and back again in time to work the next train out.

Nevertheless, Westerham's auto-train did only a short stint, and before long the Q 0-4-4T was back again. Orpington locomotive shed was responsible for providing the engines to work the Cannon Street services, but Tonbridge continued to supply Q's for the purely local trains. The engine working the morning services would be replaced by another of the same type at about half-past three in the afternoon.

From 1913, some of the P class were back again on the branch, and

by now were fitted with a modified auto-train gear. No. 323 was running in the Sevenoaks area, usually to be seen on Otford line trains until 1926, and doubtless took its turn on Westerham trains.

The coming of the Great War saw the end of the S.E. & C.R.'s Brunswick green livery and its replacement by grey, with a huge white-painted number on tank side or tender. Otherwise about the only change the passenger noticed was that by the end of the war train fares were almost double what they were before it started.

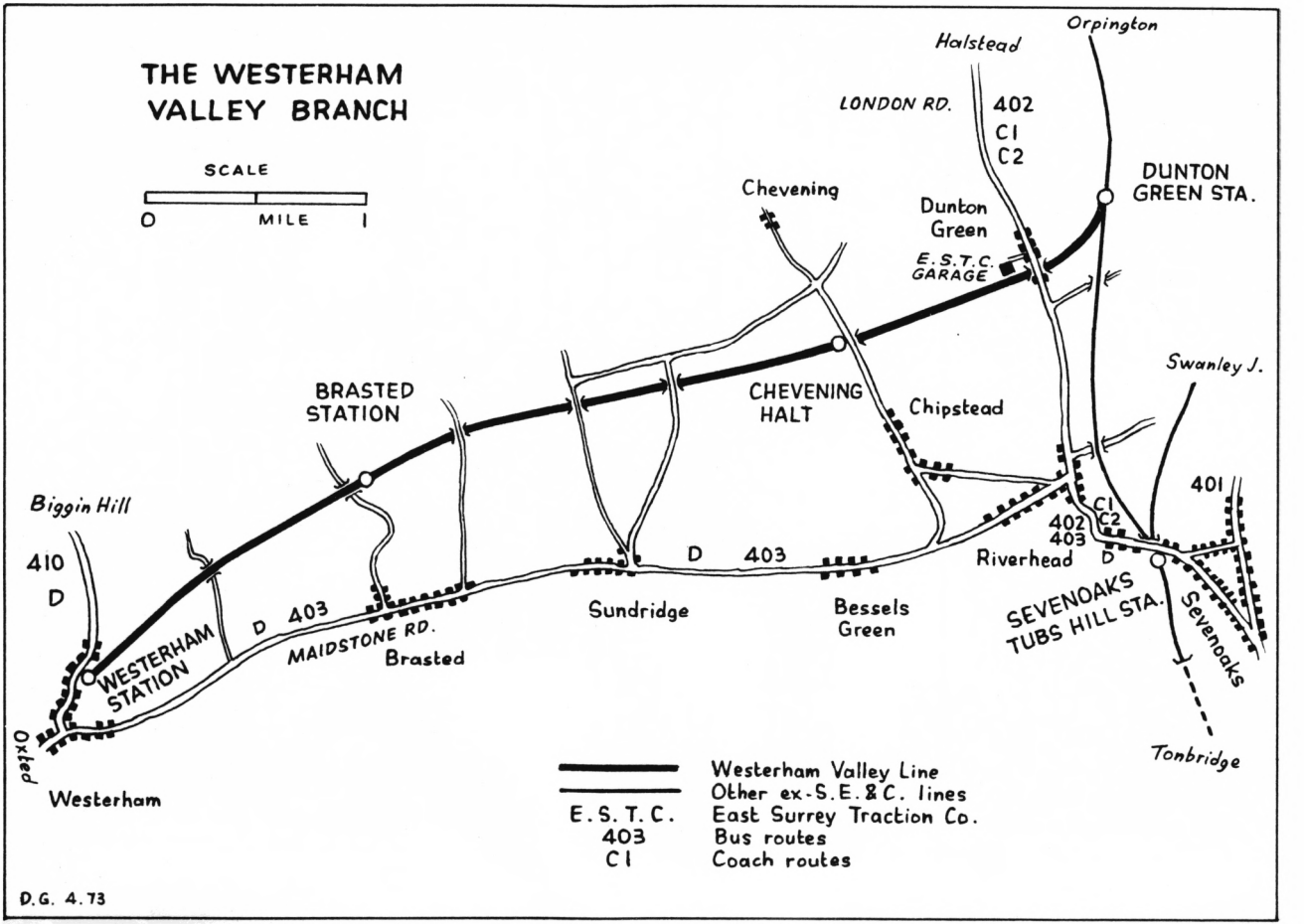
After cessation in 1917 of the practice of running Charing Cross trains via Cannon Street, it might have been expected that time-keeping would improve. In respect of fast trains it did to some extent, but local trains in the London area were deplorably unpunctual. The whole trouble was that there were too few tracks trying to accommodate too many trains, a situation that still obtains, so far as the peak-hours are concerned. It was seen that electrification of the inner London lines, followed by the outer suburban ones, would go a long way to relieving the pressure on the tracks – electric trains occupying less time in sections, and multiple-unit electric trains, such as those which the London & South Western Railway had introduced, eliminating engine movements around the termini.

Stage 1 of the S.E.C.'s electrification plan included Charing Cross and Victoria to Orpington; and Stage 2 included Orpington to Tonbridge and the Westerham branch. It appears that it was planned to use a 1,500 volts D.C. system, with current fed into two conductor rails, and three-car sets would be used. However, nothing was done, and when the Southern Railway was formed, it used the L.S.W. 600 volts D.C. 3rd rail system. In the event, Westerham never saw an electric train, and under Southern auspices, the third rail did not extend beyond Sevenoaks.

UNDER SOUTHERN AUSPICES.

From 1st January 1923, the Westerham branch, along with all the other railways worked by the Managing Committee, was included in the new "Grouped" railway company to be known as the Southern Railway. No overnight changes were apparent; in the matter of engine liveries, for example, the battleship grey of the S.E. & C. was carried on for many months, as indeed were the liveries of the London & South Western and the London, Brighton & South Coast lines. It was not until November 1923 that the first locomotive left Ashford Works in the new olive green; a livery that shortly afterwards was changed to a darker sage green.

It was not long after the formation of the S.R. that announcements were being made about the introduction of reduced rate tickets, such as weekend tickets, which were available between any two stations by ordinary trains at a cost of a single fare and a third. They could be used on any train at or after 5.0 p.m. on Fridays, any train on Saturdays, for return on Sunday or Monday, the minimum fare on Saturdays having been reduced


THE WESTERHAM VALLEY BRANCH
SCALE
0 MILE 1
Halstead
Orpington
LONDON RD.
402
C1
C2
DUNTON GREEN STA.
Chevening
Dunton Green
E.S.T.C. GARAGE
Swanley J.
BRASTED STATION
CHEVENING HALT
Chipstead
401
Biggin Hill
410
D
C1
C2
402
403
D
403
Riverhead
D
SEVENOAKS TUBS HILL STA.
Sevenoaks
WESTERHAM STATION
D 403
MAIDSTONE RD.
Brasted
Sundridge
Bessels Green
Oxted
Westerham
Tonbridge
Westerham Valley Line
Other ex-S.E.&C. lines
E.S.T.C. East Surrey Traction Co.
403 Bus routes
C1 Coach routes
D.G. 4.73

to five shillings. Another facility was the market ticket, issued on Saturdays by specified trains to market or shopping centres, such as Sevenoaks or Tonbridge. Parties of not less than 12 travelling to sports meetings, bazaars or picnics could, by prior arrangement, travel by ordinary train at a single fare for the double journey.

On the goods side, rates for the carriage of milk, newspapers and perishables were substantially reduced. In those days there was quite a heavy milk traffic at Westerham, before the road motor came to take it all.

Westerham station did see a few changes. The buildings here, as elsewhere, were repainted buff with green corner pillars, window frames and doors. The water tank and goods yard crane were light grey. The down home signal was replaced by a new lower-quadrant on a rail-built mast—a example of early S.R. signalling practice before the later standard upper quadrant was introduced in 1930. The window at the west elevation of the station building was blanked off and a lean-to hut for stores was erected there. The crossover leading from the run-round loop to the cattle dock was lifted; the engine shed was demolished, leaving only its low brick base and the ash pit.

In the 'twenties the usual coaching stock on the branch appeared to be a three-coach set of ex-London, Chatham & Dover Rly. six-wheeled vehicles comprising a three-compartment brake second (later third) ; a four-compartment first; and a five-compartment third. Sets of this type, which were push-and-pull fitted, although not always employed as such on the Westerham branch, were quite common in the Sevenoaks area. They worked to Swanley Junction via Eynsford, and were also seen on the Gravesend West Street branch. The all-third coach had only half-height divisions between the compartments, and there was a spittoon, comprising a hunk of cloth screwed to the floor, at each corner of the compartments. One hopes that this relic of a less hygienic era was not still being used at this late date! Set numbers were: 649, 650, 655, and 677. Between the coaches was a strong bar coupling, but the normal screw coupling was employed at the outer ends of the set.

After 1926 the Class P 0-6-0T was phased out as a passenger loco, (the Q class was being scrapped too) and non-motor-fitted engines arrived to work the trains. Classes B and Bi 4-4-0, and frequently the Oi 0-6-0, were seen. It would be hard to imagine more unsuitable types to work a short branch line, with constant running-round at each end, and uncomfortable tender-first running, there being no turntables. After the demise of the six-wheeled motor-fitted sets, there appeared to be an acute shortage of bogie brake coaches on the Eastern Section, and until 1933 the normal Westerham train comprised one or two ex-L.B. & S.C. bogie composites with one of the ubiquitous ex-S.E.C. six-wheeled passenger luggage vans to provide accommodation for the guard. These formations were not made up into numbered sets. An ex-L.C.D.R. six-wheeled van was noted on

16 September 1931.

Examples of locos known to have worked Westerham trains in the early thirties are: Bi 4-4-0 A 444, A 451; Oi 0-6-0 A 426, A 429 (30.4.31), A 251 (25.4.32), 1048. The motive power generally came from Tonbridge or Bricklayers Arms.

The timetable for 1931 showed sixteen up and seventeen down branch trains on Mondays to Fridays, with a journey time of thirteen minutes in either direction. On Wednesdays there were two late evening trains in each direction. The most interesting train was the 8.38 a.m. from Westerham, which was a through train to Cannon Street, arriving 9.36 a.m. On the main line it called intermediately at Knockholt, Chelsfield, Orpington, Chislehurst, and then ran fast to London Bridge. There was no balancing down through train. The 8.38 ran also on Saturdays, when there were sixteen branch trains in each direction. Sunday service showed eleven trains, of which three ran to or from Orpington and Westerham.

Sad to relate, the through train had gone by summer 1933, its path between Dunton Green and Cannon Street taken by a new train from Ashford, into which the 8.40 a.m. from Westerham now connected, providing a faster journey time than previously, since the new train arrived at Cannon St. at 9.24 a.m. The Great Depression had its effect on the Westerham line; economy was in the air, and the Southern lopped out all the trains in the middle of the day on Mondays to Fridays, at the same time cutting out the late evening trains. The Sunday service was stepped up slightly, and there were now five trains running through to Orpington on that day.

In September 1933 a new loco shed at Hither Green was opened and for the next five years this was responsible for providing the branch engines. The days of the tender locos were now over; motor-fitted ex-L.C. & D. R and Ri 0-4-4T working two-coach sets began to take charge, Nos. 1700 and 1704 being noted. Occasionally a Class D1/M (motor-fitted) 0-4-2T of L.B.S.C. origin would put in an appearance, probably coming up on the 7.14 a.m. Tunbridge Wells West to Dunton Green (for 8.15 a.m. to Westerham). No. 2355 turned up more than once.

Fortunately, the reduced train service did not last long. Conductor rails were being laid between Orpington and Sevenoaks during 1934, and electric services started on 6th January 1935. The completely reorganised timetable, with a slow train from Sevenoaks to London every half-hour, naturally reacted on the Westerham branch, and it was decided to restore the all-day service, with an off-peak interval of a train every hour connecting with alternate electric trains.

One wonders why the Southern authorities did not take the opportunity to revive the S.E. & C.R.'s plan for electrification of the branch, especially as there were so many cases of short branch lines being electrified "for good measure", despite poor traffic prospects, such as the Haywards

Heath to Horsted Keynes line. In later years it become apparent that failure to electrify a line was in effect the sounding of its death knell.

Until autumn 1934 there was an aerial ropeway running from the signal cabin at Dunton Green, on the down side, to an elevated stage at the north end of the branch platform, and this was used to pass the tablet between engineman and signalman. This clever arrangement was discontinued with electrification pending, because it was feared that in the event of a breakage of the wire it would touch the live rail, causing a short circuit.

In 1935, a Mr. E.A. Gurney-Smith sought general support for his proposal to extend the branch eastwards under the main line at Dunton Green across to Otford Junction, on the Swanley – Sevenoaks line, in order to allow a direct service of trains between Westerham and Maidstone. He thought it was disgraceful that the county town of Kent should be so inaccessible from the Sevenoaks area. Despite the fact that the recent electrification was causing houses to be built in the district, the general opinion was that such a service could not possibly pay, and no more was heard of it.

For a short while during 1936, the Sentinel-Cammell Special Rail Bus worked a tour on the branch. This remarkable vehicle, numbered 6 in the S.R.'s railcar list, had been designed for use on the Devil's Dyke branch, but, because it was high-geared to enable it to work at the same speed as the electric trains out of Brighton, it could not climb the steep gradients on the Dyke branch satisfactorily; and its brakes proved too feeble on downhill return trips. The authorities decided to give it a second chance, and the Westerham line seemed ideal, so it was transferred to the London East Division on 2nd March 1936 and placed into service. To show its capabilities to advantage, the journey time was reduced from thirteen to ten minutes, while push-and-pull trains were accelerated to take 11½ minutes. To work the branch, the Sentinel would come up on the 7.23 a.m. Tonbridge to Dunton Green and take over from the push-and-pull; then, at 2.12 p.m. it would run back in traffic to Tonbridge for servicing. Branch trains in the afternoon would once again be in the hands of an Ri, then at 5.0 p.m. the Sentinel would work "passenger" back from Tonbridge to Dunton Green to work Westerham services for the rest of the evening, helped out by a motor train during the tea-time "rush" when two trains were required at once.

The Sentinel, which seated 44 passengers, was unpopular with one section of the travelling public as it had no first class. Moreover, it was unreliable; it broke down fairly frequently in fact, as for example on 21st April 1936, while working the 10.52 a.m. Westerham to Dunton Green. On this occasion it had just passed Brasted when it developed engine trouble, and had to be pushed back to the station. The twelve passengers were delayed nearly half an hour, but were taken on to Dunton Green by a Green Line coach.

Later that year the Sentinel was laid up, although it was not actually scrapped until after the war, and push-and-pull sets once more took over all the Westerham line workings.

Since 1933 these had usually been two, numbered 481 and 482, which had been converted from the ex-S.E.C. railcars of 1906. One brake-end in each set was still in use as such, with a compartment for the driver, but the other brake-end had been converted into a first-class saloon. Additionally, there was a corridor connection between the coaches. Westerham branch push-and-pull trains almost invariably worked with the engine at the west end. From time to time, odd sets of L.B.&S.C.R. origin would appear, and more rarely, ex-L.S.W. stock.

From June, 1938, Tonbridge depot once more took over the workings, and motor-fitted Ri 0-4-4T Nos. 1700, 1703, 1704, 1707, and 1710 were allocated there. These were augmented in 1939 by R 0-4-4T Nos. 1666, 1668-70 and 1675.

In the 1930's, "railwayists"—as the Railway Magazine termed them – began to take an interest in the little branch, especially in view of its close proximity to London. It was actually the Southern's nearest steam-operated branch line to London, and as such was easily accessible, being ideal for a Saturday afternoon's outing and photographing session. It certainly was photogenic; the picturesque timber stations and quaint little trains running through charming countryside practically "made" a photograph with very little trouble.

A brief note on bus services within the area of the Westerham railway might not be out of place here. Before the railway came, there was a horse omnibus working along the six miles of road between Westerham and Sevenoaks; it was reported that this conveyance managed to take three hours to do the trip owing to the practice of stopping at every public house on the way. Departure times from Westerham to Sevenoaks Tubs Hill Station in the 1870's were at 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. The opening of the railway inevitably dealt a death-blow to these desultory services, but a useful "feeder" service was retained between Westerham and Oxted Station, with departure times at 8.15 a.m. and 4.30 p.m., returning from Oxted at 1.0 p.m. and 7.0 p.m. Additionally, "an omnibus from the 'Crown Hotel' meets every train." *

After the tramway "boom" of the 1900's was over, and it became clear that Britain was not going to have a network of electrically-worked lines covering the land, thoughts turned to providing rural motor-bus services. After the Great War, the petrol engine had been developed and some quite reliable motor-buses were then running. Realising that a bus could be run very cheaply, many enterprising individuals started up services, among them Arthur Henry Hawkins, under whom the operating territory

* *Gibson Thompson, Wolfe-land, a contemporary guide book.*

of the East Surrey Traction Company extended ever further eastwards. One of the routes ran right past Westerham station; the S10 from Reigate to Bromley, which provided a feeder to the railway by covering the proposed extension to Oxted. The route 403 ran from Croydon to Sevenoaks via Sanderstead, Chelsham and Westerham and provided direct competition to the Westerham line. In the mid-twenties, East Surrey opened a bus garage in Dunton Green, adjacent to the railway just west of the bridge carrying the Bromley – Sevenoaks road. The route 402 used this road, and although not offering competition to the branch line, it did to local trains on the main line between Knockholt and Sevenoaks.

It should be stressed that these buses were extremely slow, and being open-topped and running on solid tyres were hardly the acme of comfort. Covered-top buses, which had first made their appearance on the inner London routes in 1926, gradually came in from about 1932 on what were now the routes of London General Country Services, and before long there was hardly a village not served by a bus of some sort. Then in 1933 the London Passenger Transport Board was formed and henceforth became the local bus operator. In later years, the village of Chipstead was served by direct bus routes to Sevenoaks, the 454 and 413.

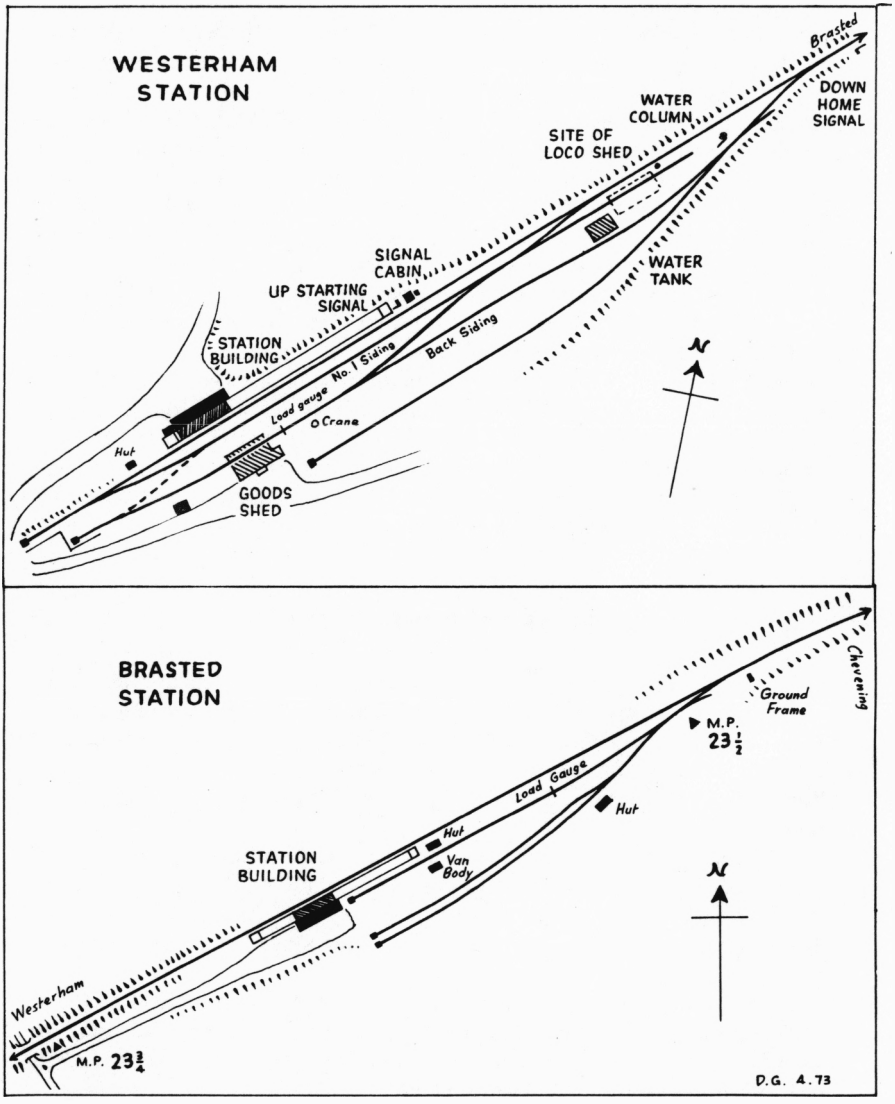
PASSENGER FACILITIES IN THE 1930's.

During this period there was a whole range of cheap rail ticket facilities, and many of these were available to the Westerham branch passenger. Naturally the full-rate ordinary single and ordinary return were retained, and indeed these particular fares were quite expensive for the time, but there must have been very few people who found it necessary to use them.

Ordinary singles were valid for three days, with break of journey permitted; from Westerham to Charing Cross the fare in 1934 was 5/4 1st, 3/2 3rd (Cannon Street 2d cheaper). These fares were still the same in 1938. The ordinary return cost twice as much as the single, and was valid three months.

Weekend returns were issued to and from London on Fridays (at or after 4.0 am), Saturdays and Sundays for return on the Saturday to Tuesday of the same weekend: the 1934 Westerham fares were 7/3 1st, 4/3 3rd: by 1938 the first class fare had been *reduced* to 6/6.

The most popular fare of all was the cheap day return, which in those days really was cheap, being just about half the price of an ordinary return. Cheap days were available from London only, by any train, for return on the same day. In 1934 the first class ticket cost 5/6, while the third class was just 3/2. This went up by one penny by 1938, but the 1st day return was reduced by 6d.



The summer return was obtainable during the season; the Westerham to London fares in 1934 were 8/6 1st and 5/- 3rd class. This ticket was valid for one month, with break of journey permitted, but the outward journey had to be completed within three days. It appears to have been later replaced by the monthly return, which is shown as being the same

fare (3rd class) in 1938, with a reduction of 1/- for the first class.

It was competition that engendered this marvellous variety of cheap fares; competition with the road motor coach operators, who did not pay the full cost of maintaining their "permanent way" and were able to offer cut-price fares; and to some extent competition with the London Passenger Transport Board, who ran "Green Line" coaches in this area. There was, for example, route D, which offered an hourly service from Westerham to Victoria via Biggin Hill and Bromley at a cost of 1/9 single and 2/9 return, with a journey time of one hour 29 minutes. Dunton Green was served by Green Line coaches C1 and C2, which provided a half-hourly service from Tunbridge Wells to Victoria via Sevenoaks, Farnborough and Bromley. The single fare from Dunton Green to Victoria was 2/-, the return 3/-, and journey time 1 hour 25 minutes. In fact, while the cheap day train fare from Westerham was but 6d dearer than the coach, that from Dunton Green was, at 2/9 3rd class, 3d cheaper.

Then there was the local bus route, which must have affected branch traffic, since in running between Westerham and Sevenoaks it went right into the villages of Brasted and Sundridge. Although still very useful for London passengers, the railway became a dead letter as far as local traffic was concerned. Few people would want to change at Dunton Green for Sevenoaks when a bus would take them there direct. Fewer still would take a train between Westerham and Brasted, as this latter station was so inconveniently situated.

Cheap excursions were offered by both the Southern Railway and the motor coach proprietors. In 1937, for example, Star Luxury Coaches, owned by W. Davis, advertised day trips to Hastings from Sevenoaks for five shillings. The Southern answered back by running Hastings excursions from Dunton Green and Sevenoaks for *four* shillings, on 6 June, 11 and 15 August, 1937. There were also excursions to Brighton (4/-) and Ramsgate, Broadstairs and Margate (5/-). Two years later, the same cheap trips were being advertised at only slightly increased prices, and were a real bargain.

WESTERHAM'S QUIET WAR.

Up to the time of the outbreak of war on 3 September 1939, the branch line carried on its duties quietly and unremarkably. The Southern Railway Magazine mentions a "slight mishap" which occurred at Dunton Green on 23 October, 1937, but gives no details. Brasted station was in the news in 1939, when it was unfortunate enough to receive the attentions of a petty thief on the night of 25 July. This gentleman wrapped a brick in a handkerchief and threw the missile through the booking office window. After going to all this trouble, he was content merely to walk off with two tickets and a pair of pliers, valued at 7s 5d!

From 1 September all railways were put under government control, and the great plan of evacuating London children was put into practice. By utilising the stock of "business" trains, which would otherwise have gone to sidings, and by running the normal Saturdays Excepted train service on both the Saturday and the Sunday, very little inconvenience was occasioned to most passengers. Over seven thousand evacuees arrived at Sevenoaks station in five days, but it seems that, once again, the Westerham branch was out of things, and the children were distributed to the surrounding villages by bus, Sevenoaks being the railhead for the area. Local buses were running normal services but there were no Green Line coaches to London – these had all been commandeered for ambulance work.

It was a time of great confusion. Cheap day tickets were withdrawn, then restored on 6 September. Then from the 11th, drastically reduced train services were operated, details of which were posted at all stations. A week later, it was decided to restore the normal "Saturdays Excepted" schedules, starting on 18 September. Platform tickets were withdrawn, as were excursion and reduced fare tickets (but not monthly returns, weekend, season and workmen's tickets).

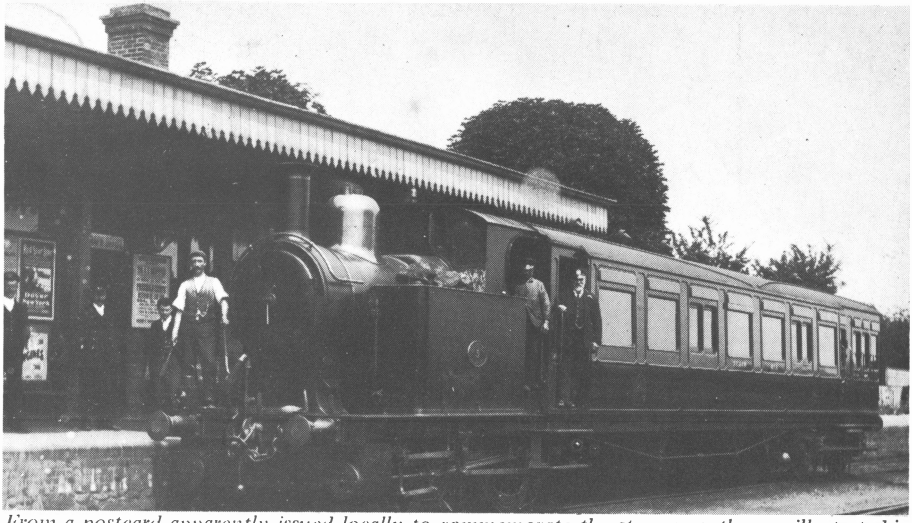
The travelling public was educated into being "black-out conscious", and all stations had their appearance altered by the use of white paint on canopy-supports, stairways, platform edges and all projecting points. Windows were totally obscured, and blue lamps were fitted at stations. Special train-lighting regulations were posted inside carriages:–

DURING "BLACK-OUT" HOURS – FOR YOUR OWN SAFETY:
KEEP ALL BLINDS DRAWN.
KEEP ALL WINDOWS SHUT
except where it is necessary to lower them so that passengers may open doors to alight.
MAKE CERTAIN
the train is at the platform, and that you alight on the platform side.
WHEN LEAVING THE CARRIAGE,
close windows, lower blinds again, and close the door quickly.
ALL NECESSARY LIGHTS
will be switched off in the event of an Air Raid warning.

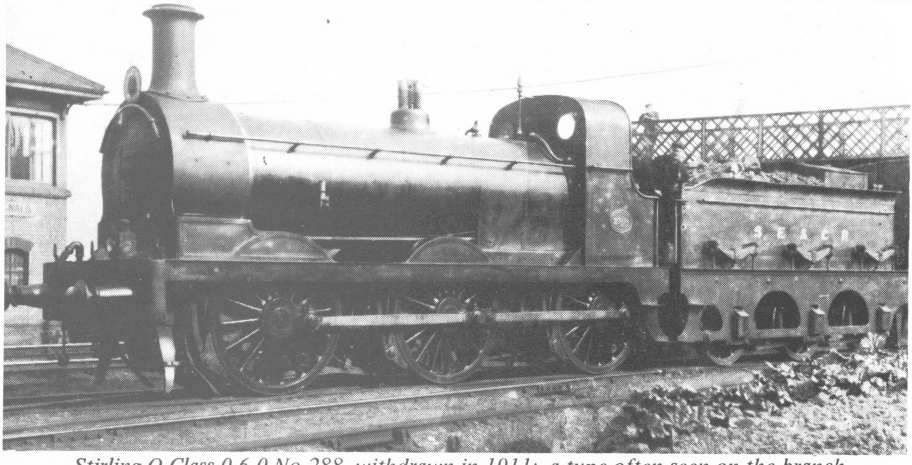
However, suburban-type trains, such as those used on the Westerham line, were unable at first to have any lighting at all, owing to the frequent stops.

From 6 October 1941 first class facilities were withdrawn from trains running wholly within the London Transport area. That was the theory, but in practice it was only the three-coach suburban electric trains that had their first class compartments converted to thirds. First class was retained

Westerham station about 1905; a busy place with the branch train in the platform, another locomotive in the loco shed, and yet another outside the goods shed. Behind the timber-bolsters can just be seen what is probably the 'Peebles' steam railcar, a proprietary design with two-cylinder compound engine and geared drive which was on test on various branch lines at this time. (E. Pouteau per H. C. Casserley)



From a postcard apparently issued locally to commemorate the steamcars; the one illustrated is No.3.

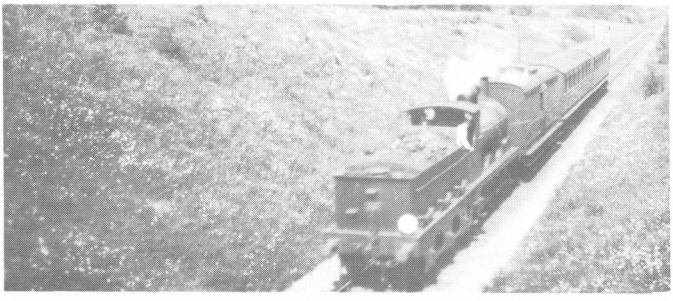


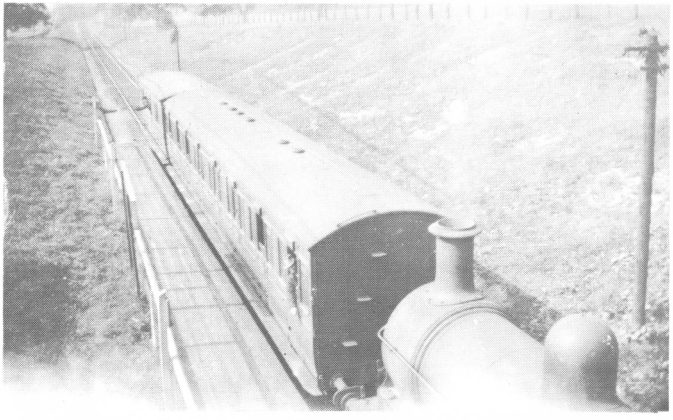
Stirling O Class 0-6-0 No.288, withdrawn in 1911; a type often seen on the branch.

Class B 4-4-0 No.A458, never rebuilt to B1, at Westerham with ex-L.C. & D.R. auto-set, 12 November 1927 (H. C. Casserley)

Push-and-pull set No.481 at Westerham, 16 June 1934. (H. C. Casserley)

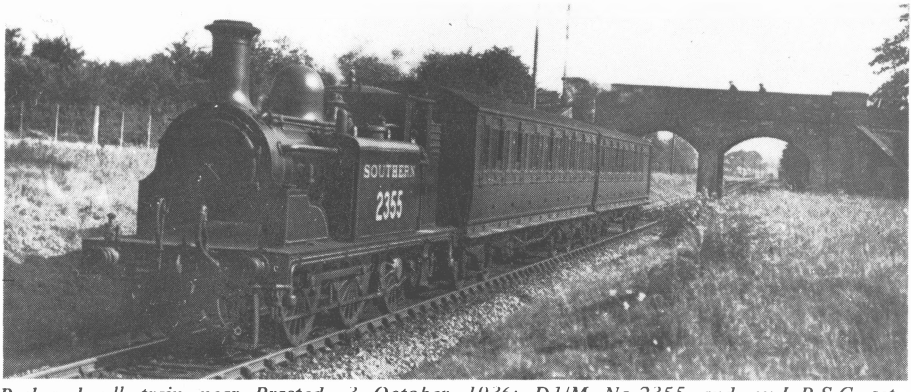
Down Westerham train near Chevening Halt, with 01 No.A426, on 9 June 1930. (R. W. Kidner)





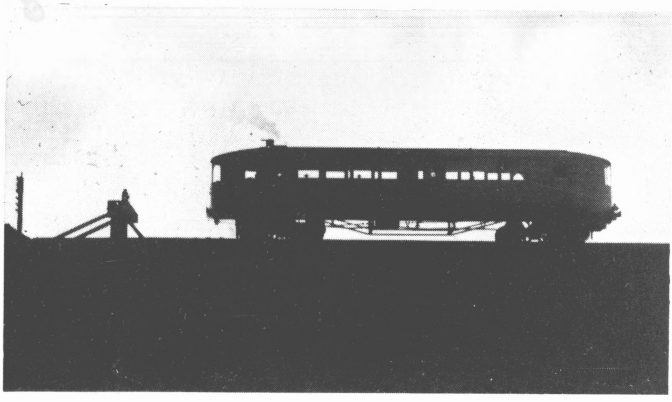
Chevening Halt, from the road bridge, showing a one-coach train with ex-L.C.D. passenger brake van, 16 September 1931. (R. W. Kidner)

A down train at Brasted, with 01 No.1048 and ex-L.B.S.C. coaches, 15 April 1933. (C. R. Gordon Stuart, courtesy Lens of Sutton)

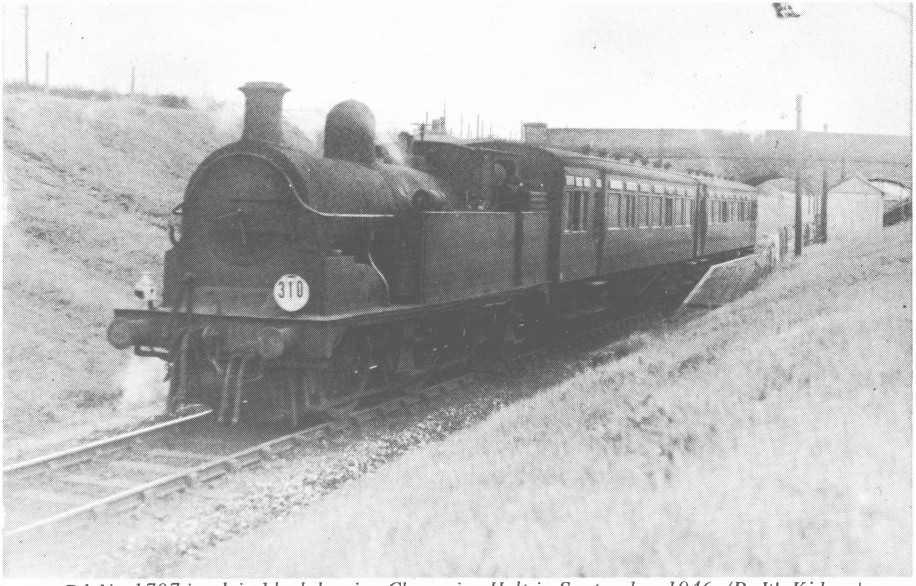


Push-and-pull train near Brasted, 3 October 1936; D1/M No.2355 and ex-L.B.S.C. set. (H. C. Casserley)

A rare photograph of the Sentinel Railbus actually working on the Westerham branch, taken on 28 March 1936. (R. W. Kidner)



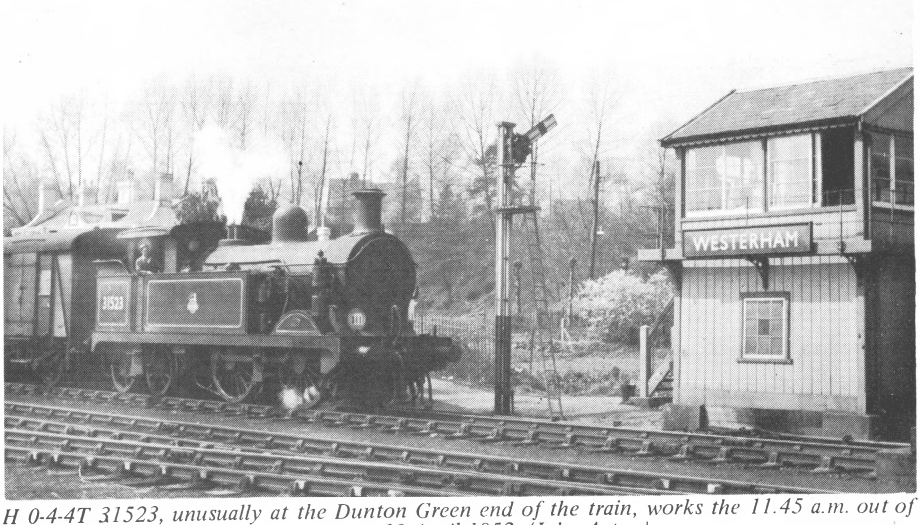
The Sentinel railcar at Dunton Green waiting to take its turn on the branch, 28 March 1936 (R. W. Kidner)



R1 No.1707 in plain black leaving Chevening Halt in September 1946. (R. W. Kidner)

The typical branch train of the late 'thirties; R1 0-4-4T 1700 and ex-railmotor set entering Westerham station. (John L. Smith collection)

Old van used as a store at Brasted, photographed on 5 May 1934; unusually, the W-irons were left in place and the body raised on piles (L. T. Catchpole)

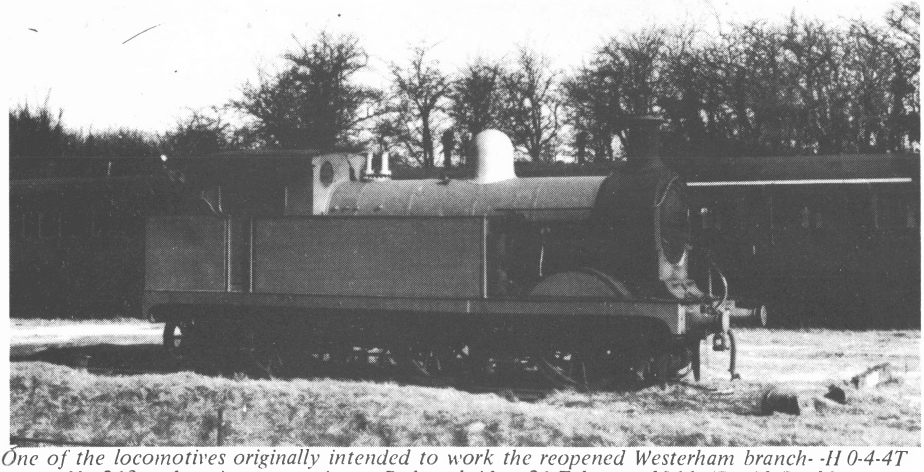


H 0-4-4T 31523, unusually at the Dunton Green end of the train, works the 11.45 a.m. out of Westerham, 19 April 1952. (John Aston)

Class H No.31520 at the water column, Westerham station, 7 May 1960. Note site of loco shed and ash pit. (John Aston)

Saturday engine changeover at Dunton Green, 14 May 1960. H No.31520 (Duty 303) on 12.50 p.m. to Westerham, and 31500 (Duty 306) waiting to take the 1.20 p.m. (John Aston)

D1 4-4-0 No.31739 with special six-coach train at Dunton Green on the last day, 28 October 1961. (Photographer unknown)



One of the locomotives originally intended to work the reopened Westerham branch- -H 0-4-4T No.263 undergoing restoration at Robertsbridge, 26 February 1966. (David Gould)

on steam trains running between Godstone and Redhill, Redhill and Guildford, East Grinstead and London, which ought to have become "one-class only". Curiously enough, the Westerham branch became the exception to this exception, and duly lost its first class, presumably because it was convenient to convert the two ex-railmotor push and pull sets, Nos. 481 and 482, which normally worked the services. Apart from the two articulated sets (513 and 514), which had always been third class only, these were the only steam-worked sets on the Southern Railway to have no first-class accommodation. Even the Gravesend West Street branch retained "firsts", and this ran wholly within the L.P.T.B. area.

On 9 March, 1945, Mr. J.H. Wildish, who had for many years been the Dunton Green stationmaster, and responsible for all the branch stations, was presented with a cheque for £15, on his promotion as stationmaster at Beckenham Junction and Kent House.

PEACE RETURNS.

On cessation of hostilities, the Southern bravely started to repaint its locomotives in malachite green as a reaction to the years of dreary black paint and dirt, but after state ownership of Britain's railways was made effective on 1 January 1948, all this was undone, and a reversion was made to black. In some cases it was relieved by red and grey lining, but nevertheless an unimaginative livery, somewhat similar to that used by the late London & North Western Railway. This livery was worn by the Class H 0-4-4T, which first started to appear on the branch around 1952, and worked on it for the rest of its existence. The push and pull sets were painted crimson lake, lined with gold and black, and looked rather more attractive. From 1957 this colour scheme was discarded in favour of a mid green, darker than malachite, and without lining. Ex-L.B. & S.C.R. push-and-pull sets quite often turned up at Westerham, and these had first class compartments, but the line still remained "one class only".

Fares had risen alarmingly since 1938. In 1949 the ordinary single Westerham to Charing Cross was 5s 2d (Cannon Street 4s 11d); the monthly return 7s; and the day return 5s 2d. By then this had the now-familiar restriction of not being available for return from London between 4.30 pm and 6.30 pm on Mondays to Fridays. Overcrowding of business trains had increased, and, as many people worked on Saturday mornings in those days, the day return could not be used between 1.0 noon and 1.30 pm on Saturdays.

The bridge over the line at Chevening Halt was reconstructed and the old timber platform replaced by a concrete one; while at Westerham the old ex-SE&C up starting signal was replaced by an SR-type upper quadrant on a rail-built mast. Other than that, the appearance of the line under British Railways changed but little.

Up to 1955, the branch was worked on the electric tablet system, and was arranged to allow two trains to be in circuit during the evening peak period. After the 6.5 pm from Dunton Green had arrived at Westerham at 6.16, and shunted to the siding to leave the platform clear, the 6.23 pm to Westerham was able to leave Dunton Green. There would then be two trains together at Westerham station. This was a masterpiece of operational slickness. The single line instruments were kept in a small enclosure on the branch platform at Dunton Green to obviate crossing the main line to the signal cabin on the down side. This had been in force since the replacement of the aerial ropeway mentioned earlier.

There was a good train service: off-peak and on Sundays trains ran at hourly intervals. But a close look was taken at the line by B.R., and it was decided to work the line on the "one-engine-in-steam" principle, using a miniature train staff under the control of the Dunton Green signalman. Brasted joined Chevening in becoming an unstaffed halt, and from 13 June 1955, there would no longer by any trains in the slack periods, although a Sunday service was retained during the summer months only. The branch thus became a "commuter line", an appellation it would retain until its end. The train itself became known as the "Westerham Flyer".

A look at the locomotive workings for 1956-7 may be of interest. The Monday to Friday service required the attention of one Class H 0-4-4T, working Tonbridge Duty No. 310. After working the 5.0 am from Tonbridge to Sevenoaks, and running light thence to Dunton Green, it hauled the 5.35 am goods train to Westerham, where, on arrival at 5.50 am, and after doing a spot of shunting, it picked up the 2-coach set left there from the previous evening. Then it worked all the morning services, starting with the 6.16 am to Dunton Green, and after the last up train, the 9.54 am from Westerham, worked the stock to Tonbridge, arriving at 10.35 am.

The locomotive's work started again by working the 4.0 pm empty stock from Tonbridge to Dunton Green, doubtless using a different set to facilitate stock rotation, and worked all the branch services until the last down train, the 8.0 pm to Westerham. Some more freight shunting and then the H would work the 8.50 pm goods to Dunton Green (arr. 9.30 pm) probably dropping and picking up wagons at Brasted's small yard. The day's work would be over when the loco had run light from Dunton Green to Tonbridge, arriving at 10.17 pm.

On Saturdays interest was increased because two locomotives were needed. The morning workings were the same as on Monday to Friday; however, before noon the H Class working Duty No. 301 ran up with the 11.17 am empty stock to Dunton Green and worked the branch until the 4.31 pm arrival at Dunton Green from Westerham. Meanwhile, Duty 310, running light from Tonbridge, would arrive at 4.30 pm. The locos then changed over, Duty 310 taking the 5.0 pm to Westerham, and Duty 301

returning light to Tonbridge shed. On the branch, work finished with the 8.20 pm Westerham to Dunton Green, the coaches being left in the yard there for Sunday morning (the evening freight did not run on Saturdays) and the loco returning to the shed.

Sunday was the only day of the week with a service throughout the day, the morning trains being worked to Tonbridge Duty No. 302, and the afternoon ones to No. 303. The changeover was at 12.40 pm in Dunton Green. After the last train, the coaches had to be left at Westerham for Monday morning, and the loco ran light at 10.20 pm to Sevenoaks, there taking the 11.32 pm train to Tonbridge.

As a rule, one set of men worked all the morning services, and a relieving set took over for the afternoon. It must have been very monotonous trundling up and down this short branch anything up to ten times during the turn of duty.

Until about 1955, the normal motive power was still the ex-L.C.&D. R and R1 0-4-4T, of which Nos. 31666, 31675, 31703 and 31704 were at Tonbridge shed. These locos also were painted in the lined black livery. 31704, the last survivor, was withdrawn in 1956, but the H 0-4-4T, fitted with second-hand motor train gear, had already been working the line for the last four years.

The two ex-railmotor push-and-pull sets lasted somewhat longer, at least until 1960, and continued to be the Westerham line's special preserve, with a guard selling Bell Punch-type tickets from a wooden rack. Regular passengers were used to the fact that the carriage doors opened inwards, but strangers were completely baffled, and tales are told of prospective passengers beating upon the unyielding door panels in a vain attempt to gain admission!

This stock, now over fifty years old, became due for replacement, and, to B.R.'s credit, they conceived the must luxurious push-and-pull set ever. One coach was an ex-S.R. open second with drop windows, with the gangway at the locomotive end sheeted over and the lavatory compartments closed off. The other coach was an ex-S.R. corridor brake composite with two first class compartments, and part of the luggage area taken over for the driving controls. The driving end was a featureless blank area, relieved only by two tiny windows for the driver. The coaches were nine feet wide over body, so for the first time Westerham passengers could enjoy the benefits of full width stock. These B.R. conversions, which by 1961 numbered 20, took over all the branch working right up to closure date. The sets were numbered 600 to 619, and, in common with all other push and pull sets, had the number painted only on the driving end. Details

of specimen sets are set out below:–

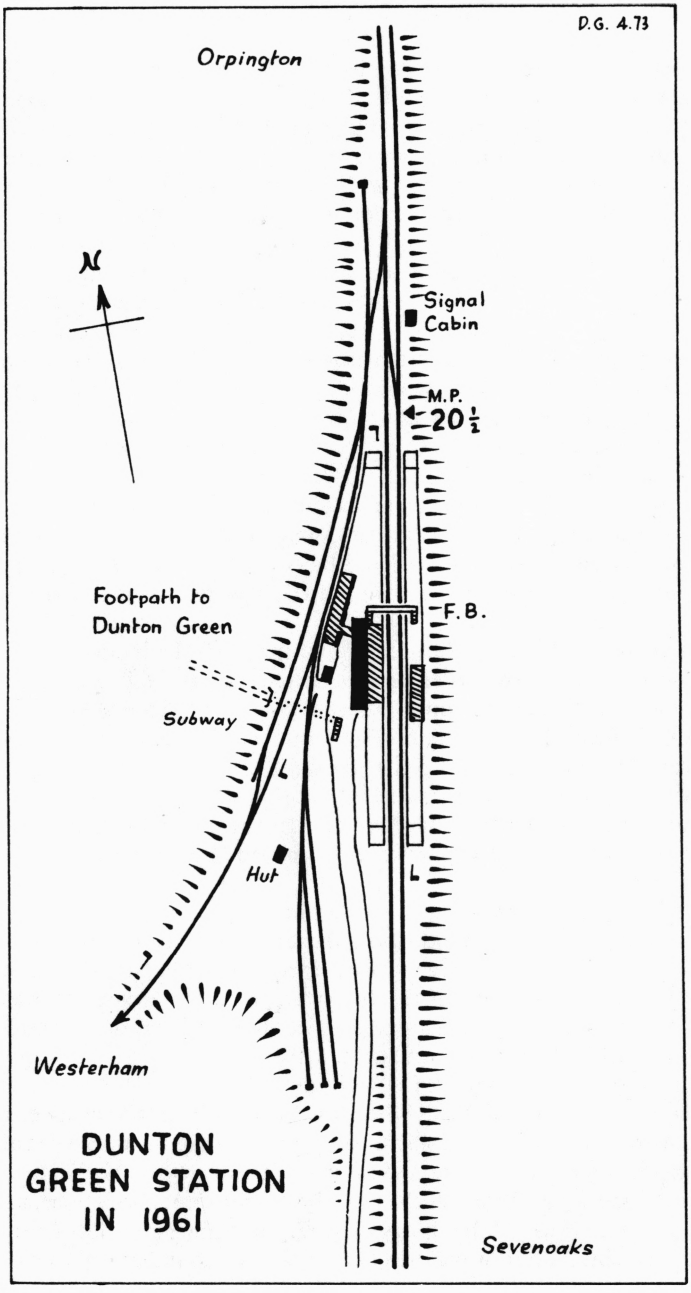
Set No.	Vehicles Type	No.	Compts. 1st	2nd	Seats 1st	2nd
609	BCK	6694	2	4	12	32
	SO	1353	-	2	-	56
610	BCK	6679	2	4	12	32
	SO	1317	-	2	-	56
614	BCK	6690	2	4	12	32
	SO	1354	-	2	-	56

However, sets of ex-L.B.S.C. stock were still to be seen until 1960. These also were gangwayed between coaches, and had the curious internal arrangement of a side corridor running past "compartments" that had neither partitions nor sliding doors.

The sets converted from Southern Railway stock were not the first wide coaches ever to have appeared, for on Tuesday 15 January, 1957,an 11-coach train of Maunsell stock was worked on a day excursion from Westerham to Kensington Olympia by Class WC 4-6-2 No. 34017 'Ilfracombe'. As the train would have been far too long to clear the run-round loop, it had to be worked out of Westerham with a loco at each end, and Class Dl 4-4-0 No. 31487 was on rear. The departure time was 12.15 pm, which was during the time of day when there was no branch service, but the return trip had to terminate at Dunton Green, as the branch train was now working.

One event of which there is record did occur to disrupt the normally uneventful life of the branch. On 5th September 1959, when floods blocked Sevenoaks Tunnel and main-line trains had to run via Oxted or Redhill for three days, there was an earthslip between Dunton Green and Chevening Halt. This certainly demonstrated the truth of the old adage "Misfortunes never come singly"!

The following members of the H 0-4-4T are known to have worked the line in its last years:– 31164, 31263, 31324, 31500, 31520, 31523 and 31553. With many steam sheds in Kent being closed owing to electrification there were far fewer duties to work, and this was reflected by the Westerham locos carrying the duty numbers 238 or 239 from 12 June 1961, instead of 310 or 311, which had been the usual numbers since 1938. The operation of a steam-worked line could not carry on much longer, and if the authorities could not close it, they would electrify it, using second-hand material.


D.G. 4.73
Orpington
N
Signal Cabin
M.P. 20½
Footpath to Dunton Green
F.B.
Subway
Hut
Westerham
Sevenoaks
DUNTON GREEN STATION IN 1961

THE BRANCH CLOSES.

Despite the operating economies that had been instigated in 1955, the line was stated to be losing B.R. £11,600 per annum, and in April of 1960, the first closure proposal was made public. No attempt was made by B.R. to investigate whether it was possible to run the line more cheaply, such as by using a railcar and by eliminating the signalling. It was strongly felt locally that the practice of keeping the motive power at Tonbridge and running empty between there and Dunton Green was all charged to the deficit. If the branch could be run by an independent company, overheads and staff costs would be much less. One man, recalling the West Sussex Railway and the old Ford railbus which Colonel Stephens had employed, believed passionately that such a device – an old motor coach fitted with flanged wheels – would be just the thing for the Westerham branch. Maintenance could be undertaken by local garagemen as part of their normal work; the driver of the contraption could also sell tickets and might possibly be an old retired B.R. driver.

However, there was a stay of execution for the time being, as the Central Transport User's Consultative Committee had recommended that the line stay open as a social need. Hardship would be caused to commuters if the line closed, it claimed. Two hundred daily regular passengers used the service.

In August, 1961, the Minister of Transport, Mr. Ernest Marples,took the almost certainly unprecedented step of rejecting the T.U.C.C.'s recommendation that the line stay open and very soon the official closure notice was made known. The last train would run on the 28th October 1961. Effectively, the T.U.C.C., which had been set up to look after rail passengers' interests, was revealed as having no power; any decision it might make could be over-ruled by the Minister. It was thought locally that this was the first time such a thing had ever happened. The Westerham line was in fact a hapless guinea-pig.

At once, the community was up in arms. A petition was signed by nearly 2,500 people, and hundreds of letters were received by the M.P. for Sevenoaks, Mr. John Rodgers, who forwarded them to Mr. Marples. When Mr. Rodgers duly presented the petition in the House, he was informed by the Minister that the train service showed a loss of £26,000 per annum – over £150 for every regular passenger.

Mr. Marples was adamant. He went on:–

"It is an enormous loss. When we look at it in perspective, it is terrific. After very careful consideration, I myself have taken the decision. I have gone to look at the line and to walk in the area on weekdays and Sundays. I used dark glasses so that no one would recognise me, because I felt I might hear some of the things I have been reading in letters from my constituents, and I did not want to be subject to that indignity. I take full

responsibility for my decision . . . constituents must not blame anybody else."

Later, Mr. Rodgers suggested that the real reason for hastening the line's end was to facilitate the construction of a South Orbital road, running along its course. In the light of subsequent events, the reply received from the Parliamentary Secretary is of interest:—

"When we had our talk on 13th September about the closure of the Westerham – Dunton Green line you mentioned to me a current rumour that the Minister might have been influenced in reaching his decision by the possibility that certain proposed road improvements could be more economically carried out if the line were closed. I have made careful enquiries and I can assure you that any such suggestion is unfounded . . . The line of the road has not yet been fixed, and the Minister has not authorised any detail survey."

And so the battle to retain the line was lost, and the closure date, Saturday 28th October, 1961, arrived. There was bright sunshine, and photographers were well in evidence. Morning trains were worked by Class H 0-4-4T No. 31518 on Tonbridge Duty No. 239, with the usual two-coach push-and-pull set. The locomotive was adorned with a Union Jack, and the inscription "Flyer 1881-1961" was chalked on the smokebox.

Vast crowds arrived to join those who had already been travelling up and down on every train since early morning, and the operating authorities put on a six-coach corridor train from early afternoon, worked by Class Di 4-4-0 No. 31739. Tape recorders were in full play. On the train were some of the more extreme type of enthusiasts, who admitted that they only travelled on branch lines on their last day of operation, and were quite prepared to ride great distances to indulge this somewhat morbid sport.

The last trains of all were the 7.23 pm Westerham to Dunton Green and the 7.50 pm Dunton Green to Westerham. At Westerham, squibs and bangers were ignited, the signal cabin was swamped with visitors, and passengers for the 7.23 pm were wandering along the track to reach the coaches, the platform being too short for the six coach train, which was being worked by Class Qi 0-6-0 No. 33029.

On the return journey from Dunton Green frenzy mounted, and as the train passed through Brasted station, the waiting crowds yelled and screamed their farewells.

On its arrival at Westerham, Mrs. Jane Graves, who had been a passenger on the first train in 1881, and was on the last one that evening, was presented with a bouquet. She shook hands with the driver, Mr. Alfred Gilan. Mrs. Graves' brother, Major A. Waters, had registered his protest at the closure from Bangalore!

Oddly enough, there were no speeches.

That was the end of the "Flyer"; it had been a well-loved train. Now commuters had to get into a new routine, for, starting on Monday, 30th

October, 1961, London Transport was to run additional buses on route 403. There were five extra journeys from Westerham to Sevenoaks between 6.0 am and 9.0 am; and six extra buses between 5.0 pm and 8.0 pm from Sevenoaks to Westerham. They were planned to give the best possible connections with fast trains at Sevenoaks. What is more, existing rail passengers holding season tickets were able to use them on the buses until 30 October 1962.

For the casual passenger this arrangement was reasonable enough, but for the regular commuter, suffering two hard winters in unheated 'RT' buses it became increasingly unsatisfactory. Often the bus would not turn up; timekeeping was poor and connections were missed; and each journey cost the passenger one shilling, i.e. an extra 10/- a week for the regular traveller to find. Small wonder that he would do his utmost to get the railway reopened by any means within his power.

THE STRUGGLE TO REOPEN.

The Westerham Branch Railway Passengers' Association had been formed some two years before the closure to fight for retention of the "unremunerative" train services, and at its annual general meeting in November 1961 it decided to seek reopening of the line by some independent body. Meanwhile, several railway enthusiasts had formed the Westerham Valley Railway Society, and a census held locally had indicated large support for restoring train services. As the two groups had so much in common, it was wisely decided to amalgamate: this was done in January 1962.

A public meeting was held in Westerham on 3 March 1962, where the aims of the newly-styled Westerham Valley Railway Association were put forward. The members of the Committee were chosen to represent "Commuters" (Messrs. Bentley, S.F. Curran, J. Cameron, W.G. Gray and D.E. Walter); Community; and Enthusiasts (Messrs. Burkenshaw, R . Edwards, D.E. Pope, and A. Snowdon). Mr. Gray was Chairman of the Committee.

The plan put forward was to operate a diesel railcar service on Monday to Friday for "commuters" and community, with approximately the same timings and fares as previously obtaining; and a weekend vintage steam service for tourists etc., running between April and October. It was accepted that the railcar service could not itself be profitable – it would be the steam service, run by volunteers, that would provide the "bread and butter". British Railways had stated that they would agree to sell the line for £30,000 on condition that a commuter service was run, as BR had to subsidise the replacing bus services (extra peak journeys on route 403 between Westerham and Sevenoaks) to the tune of £8,700 a year. So clearly BR could only gain by the branch's reopening.

Despite criticism by steam die-hards of the proposals to run railcars, the Committee felt this was the only economical, indeed practicable, way to run the line. With a steam service, there would be the little matter of paying someone to light up the fire at about 4.30 in the morning – an unattractive proposition to a Company with limited resources. Incidentally, it was not proposed to run a freight service.

There was, unfortunately, just one cloud coming over the horizon – the fact that Kent County Council was anxious to convert most of the course of railway to a road, as part of its great South Orbital Motorway scheme. On the face of it, though, things looked bright: in July 1962 the Association obtained a lease on the station building at Westerham, which then became the Headquarters. The broken glass was replaced, the structure generally smartened up, and for the princely sum of 1d, the public was admitted to the waiting room and platform to inspect the progress. Considerably interested in what was going on, and tempted by the then subscription rate of 2s 6d, I decided to become a member and although somewhat youthful, was able to assist in some of the work, such as sanding rust off the signal cabin levers, oiling fishplates and even a spell of repainting the station building – a very enjoyable task. The colours chosen for this structure were cream with maroon trim, stated to be the S.E.&C.R. colour scheme, and looked very attractive.

In October it was revealed that Mr. Ian Allan was interested in operating the line through a Management Committee on which the W.V.R.A. would be represented. This company would then form part of his group of Companies. The W.V.R.A. Chairman stated that this venture was a "unique experiment which would be watched with interest throughout the whole country. It was an experiment in organisation, management and co-partnership." *

The W.V.R.A. Committee was now as follows:– Chairman, W.G. Gray; ten Ordinary Members, Kenneth G. Carr, Percy Cope, S.F. Curran, J. Cameron, Roy Edwards, David Kitton, D.W. Pocock, Denis Pope, Alan Snowdon and D.E. Walter.

It was planned to purchase two Class H 0-4-4T Nos. 31518 and 31263: these were inspected by two members of the Technical Committee at Three Bridges and found to be in excellent condition. The cost of purchase was £1,000 each. Additionally, Southern Region offered the last surviving Class Oi 0-6-0, No. 31065. A member, Mr. R.F. Stephens, meanwhile started a fund to preserve a Class C 0-6-0, No. 31592, for eventual operation on the line. £1,000 was quoted as the cost of the Oi.

Funds were not as high as they might have been; in 1963 the subscription rate was increased to a more realistic level.

Five ex-G.W.R. diesel railcars were inspected at Worcester, and found to be in a reasonable state: it was considered that three would

** W.V.R.A. Minutes, 6 October 1962.*

suffice for service, at a cost of £600 each. They were part of a batch built in 1940, Nos. 19-32 with 48 seats.

Hidden in the goods shed at Westerham was the only item of rolling stock that actually worked on the line during this period – the "Rail-mobile", a railway truck powered by a motor car mounted upon it, the invention of Mr. C.J. Prescott, who received permission from BR to try out the machine on the line. It was stressed that this conveyance was in no way connected with the proposed "railcar" service!

Then came a major setback: Mr. Ian Allan withdrew his support as a backer, since the planning applications he had made to develop surplus land at Westerham station for a petrol station had been refused. By now quite a few of the original Committee members had resigned for various reasons, and by autumn 1963 the setup included K.C. Tozer as Chairman, S.F. Curran (vice-chairman); on the Committee were Mr. Carr, Mr. Cope, Mr. Pope and Mr. R.D.G. Ranson, Mr. D. Kitton was chairman of the Publicity Committee, and Mr. J.C. Locke chaired the Technical Committee.

There were certain factions who were not keen on the idea of running a commuter service, and it was thought that B.R. could be persuaded to sell the line for £35,000 without the liability to run this service. But that would only make it all the easier for Kent County Council to step in. If the W.V.R.A. was still willing to run the commuter service, then the K.C.C. would have, it was thought, no option but to stand aside.

But so great was Kent County Council's determination to get hold of the line to implement its road schemes, that it started to threaten compulsory purchase, and British Railways (Southern) were forced to break off negotiations with the W.V.R.A. The Council stated that the W.V.R.A. might still operate the line on condition it paid £26,215 for a bridge to carry the South Orbital road over the railway at Chevening. This was a staggering sum, seeing that the County Surveyor had earlier estimated the cost as £14,000! Moreover, this sum was to be paid in full by 23 August 1964, otherwise the Council would immediately start filling in the railway cutting at Chevening.

Meanwhile, three ex-Metropolitan Railway "Dreadnought" coaches had been purchased from London Transport, namely a brake 3rd, a nine-compartment 3rd and a seven-compartment 1st. It had been planned to work these coaches down from Neasden to Dunton Green by way of Baker Street, Liverpool Street, Aldgate, New Cross and Hither Green, on Sunday 23 August 1964. Southern Region had been agreeable to allow the Association to store the stock in Dunton Green goods yard. Then suddenly B.R. stated that they were "reluctant" to allow this, owing to the difficulties the W.V.R.A. was in with the K.C.C.

Permission was granted from the War Office to store the stock on the disused Admiralty sidings at Sharnal Street, in the Hundred of Hoo. Even this was thwarted by B.R., who stated that the Hoo branch was closed (which it was not). The Association was told it could not be given

access to the sidings because the line was virtually closed, but was to be reopened the following year with a frequent train service! Arrangement was made with the Kent & East Sussex Railway Preservation Society to store the coaches at Robertsbridge for the time being, but in the event they were sent to the Keighley & Worth Valley Railway, on loan for four years, remaining the property of the member who had originally bought them for use on the Westerham line. Apparently the notorious Hastings Line clearances prevented them from being worked to Robertsbridge. The owner was actually Mr. D.H. Kitton.

There was another coach which has not been mentioned; the ex-S.E. & C.R. "Continental" brake 3rd of 1924, purchased in 1962 by Mr. Roy Edwards for resale to, and use by, the Westerham Valley Railway. The coach had been stored for some time at Hassocks goods yard, until it had to be moved to the Keighley & Worth Valley Rly, but in this case it was an outright sale. It is saddening to think that it might have been possible to ride in one of these magnificent coaches on former S.E. & C.R. territory. It looks as out of place in Yorkshire as a Caledonian Rly. coach does in Sussex!

Seeking fair play, the W.V.R.A. was given some publicity in the 'Kent Messenger', and the Member of Parliament for Faversham, Mr. Terence Boston, sought to persuade first Mr. Marples, then, after the General Election, Mr. Tom Fraser, to intervene and hold an enquiry into K.C.C.'s questionable treatment of the Association. The Minister refused, and by November 1964, the cutting at Chevening had been filled and the track there lifted.

Fortunately, the last remaining Class H locomotive had been saved, and in 1965 No. 31263 was sent to Robertsbridge. Gradually it became clear that an amalgamation with the K. & E.S.R.P.S. was the only hope, although this concern was far from being ideal. It appeared that there were two factions: the K. & E.S.R. Company, controlled by Mr. G. Pickin, who had most of the funds but no support, and the K. & E.S.R. Society, which had complete support but little money. At first, the W.V.R.A. looked askance at the intolerance and rivalry, and deferred amalgamation for the time being.

Nevertheless, things must have improved, as in January 1966, Westerham Valley Railway Association members were sent a newsletter stating that the proposed amalgamation with the Kent & East Sussex Railway Preservation Society was now a fact. "Now that there is no hope of achieving our ambition of reopening the Westerham branch we believe that this is the best possible course for us," it was stated. "Your Committee are naturally disappointed, for we laboured long to save the line, but we rejoice that at last, in its new joint role, our Association can look forward to fulfilling its aim of launching and operating a railway offering a valuable service to the community and preserving steam in the South East."

Some former W.V.R.A. Committee members were taken on by the

newly-styled Kent & East Sussex Railway Association - R.D.G. Ranson as joint Secretary, P.G. Cox, L.E. Hibbert, and David Kitton as Publicity Officer.

To help pay for the Class H No. 263 (original S.E.C. number), the "H" Class Trust was set up, with four Trustees from the former W.V.R.A. as Governors, the object being that no single person could claim ownership of the locomotive. It was proposed to repaint it in full S.E. & C.R. livery, and to work it on a suitable line; hopefully the K. & E.S.R. Some progress was made with restoration, but after spending some years in the open at Robertsbridge, it was moved to the South Eastern Steam Centre at Ashford on 2nd February, 1969. Its owners felt that better facilities for work on the loco would exist there. Meanwhile the Class C No. 31592, owned by the Wainwright "C" Preservation Society, of which Mr. R.F. Stephens was Secretary, was also scheduled to be sent to Robertsbridge, but in the event, after a sojourn at the South Eastern Steam Centre, has gravitated to the Bluebell Railway. Incidentally, the Oi previously mentioned, No. 31065, was actually purchased from B.R. by Mr. Esmond Lewis-Evans, and this loco, repainted in S.E.C.R. livery as No. 65, is at the time of writing at the S.E. Steam Centre.

And so, while the new K.E.S.R.A. went forward in a spirit of hope, "Westerham", which some would say took an unconscionable time about it, finally died. By March 1967 the track had been lifted and all the buildings at Westerham station demolished. Commuters were left to the mercies of the bus, if they had not already become motorised. It seems that nothing fails like failure, and for all the hard work put into the project, there is nothing to show. But it is thanks to W.V.R.A. members that two fine S.E.C.R. locomotives, and four coaches, have been preserved, so this should not be forgotten.

It is good to record that not all County Councils have been as unfeeling and obstructive as Kent; Devon in particular should be singled out for not raising any objection to the opening of the Seaton & District Tramway, and Somerset C.C. has purchased the entire Minehead railway to lease it to the operating company. An action of this sort would undoubtedly have saved Westerham.

TAILPIECE.

If the story of this small railway seems to have been told in great detail, compared with some books on major railways, two reasons can be advanced. First, it represented quite close to London an example of railway charm usually only found in the deep country. In the 'thirties the staff at Brasted set out beside the rails opposite the platform the station name in whitewashed stones, with a neat border in the same material, set in clean black ash, some twenty feet long; combined with the trimmed

bushes, fluted cast-iron lamp posts and archetypal two-wheeled porter's barrow, this was a 'model' station in real life. Second, the refusal by authority to allow the preservation of this line for some slight advantage to the concrete monstrosity of road interchanges which now befouls the area between Chevening and Dunton Green must represent one of the worst environmental follies of recent years, and many people must feel that some slight comfort can be taken from an adequate preservation at least in print.

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MISCELLANEA.

The line was built during the South Eastern's "poor" period, and this was reflected by the unsubstantial nature of the buildings. They were all timber structures with low brick base. The branch was single track throughout, without a passing place even at Brasted, and was generally easily graded, though there were short stretches of 1 in 73 - 76. Although the bridges carried over the line were constructed with an additional arch for a second track if required, none of the earthworks or other bridges had this provision.

When the South Eastern's new main line opened in 1868, it was mileposted from London Bridge * and it was left to the S.E. & C.R. to re-mileage all its lines from Charing Cross (and Chatham lines from Victoria) using handsome cast iron plates showing the mile in bold figures with the quarters represented by dots. The Westerham branch followed the general rule and took its mileage from Charing Cross.

Dunton Green (20m 46c) had a separate branch platform, with a run-round loop and spur. In later years at least, although through running up to Orpington was possible, a down train from the main line to Westerham would have to run into the down main platform and set back over the crossover.

After a sharp curve out of Dunton Green, the branch made a bee-line for Chevening Halt (21m 70c) where was encountered a fairly deep cutting, the only notable engineering work on the line. Brasted (23m 52c) had a pleasing, well-proportioned station building. In the coal yard there was until well after closure an old van body which had been there since the 'thirties at least. Originally, Brasted was signalled, but this can have been of little use since there could only be one train in the section. Not only was the station some way from the village, it was well off the road, being approached by a long sloping approach.

The line ended abruptly at Westerham (25m 22c), a station that never looked as if it were intended to function as a terminus. Certainly it had plenty of facilities: a large water tank supported on six spindly legs; a tiny signal cabin with thirteen levers; a fairly substantial goods yard with a medium-sized goods shed; and the station building itself. Here the canopy did not quite extend the full length of the structure, and one of the windows had what looked like a door extending into part of it. However, it was not a door, merely a fixed piece of wood. Close examination of the structure gave one the impression that it had been not so much designed, as slung together! For all that, it was a building of character – and, one may say, charm.

** (The Westerham branch was measured from Dunton Green)*

In post-war days, regular passengers found their daily journey to be a real pleasure. The guard was a talkative type who knew everyone who travelled, and many who did not. So friendly was the general atmosphere, indeed, that the return journey was looked forward to as a diversion from the day's toil in London. After the replacement push-and-pull sets came on, it was reported that in one of the coaches was a framed reproduction of a Kentish oast house, which had been upside down for as long as anyone could remember!

Mention was made earlier of a special train from Westerham to Kensington Olympia; it seems that 1957 was quite a year for specials for on 10th November a "Kentish Heights Special" was advertised to run from Greenford to Westerham via Clapham Junction and Crystal Palace, returning via Norwood Junction. It was scheduled to be hauled by the revived G.W.R. 4-4-0, "City of Truro".

In the two years after closure, when at weekends Westerham station would be a hive of activity, there was enough happening to take one's mind off the struggles that were going on behind the scenes. For example, Mr. Denis Pope, who in addition to his duties as Committee member, would often turn up at Westerham on his motor-cycle combination (named "Hesperus"!) and put in hours of work, as did Mr. Roy Edwards. One very successful operation was the connecting of the signal cabin to the station building by telephone. When the W.V.R.A. obtained possession of Brasted station, a telephone link to Westerham station was installed. Meanwhile, there was always the unglamorous work to be done, such as track maintenance, clearing the drains and ditches, and keeping the growth of bushes and hedges under control.

TIMETABLES.

A selection of Westerham Valley timetables is included, and should be of interest, as they do go some way to showing how the railway was worked. The official S.E. & C.R. Working Timetable books are very useful, particularly as they give many of the all-round carriage working diagrams, but even they do not give the full story, since light engine movements and certain empty coaching stock workings are omitted.

Some notes on the tables will be given.

1904: Branch trains still being worked by engine sub-shedded at Westerham, possibly assisted by the loco which worked the goods to and from Bricklayers Arms. Through train workings as under:–

No. 2

am		am
	Westerham	8.40 A
9.34	Cannon St.	9.37 Ety.
Ety.	Rotherhithe Rd.	
pm		pm
	Rotherhithe Rd.	4.25 Ety.
Ety.	Charing Cross	4.56 SX
6. 7	Westerham	

A Attached to No. 20 Mondays Excepted and No. 10 Mondays Only.

No. 20 Mondays Excepted

am		am
	Rotherhithe Rd.	6.40 Ety.
7.15	Dunton Green	7.45
7.55	Westerham	8.40
9.34	Cannon St.	9.37 Ety.
Ety.	Rotherhithe Rd.	

On Mondays, stock for 7.45 am worked Ety. from Tonbridge to Dunton Green, then as Mondays Excepted – Working No. 10.

1906: Branch trains handled by Railmotor and Brake Composite. A note in the timetable stated, "The Additional Load conveyed by this Vehicle *must not* exceed 2 Ordinary Six-Wheeled Vehicles or 1 Tri-Composite Bogie, or 3 Horse Boxes." Other trains worked as under:–

No. 8

am		am
	Rotherhithe Rd.	Ety.
Ety.	Cannon St.	5.10
6. 8	Dunton Green	6.25
6.36	Westerham	7.25
7.36	Dunton Green	7.45
7.58	Westerham	8.38
9.34	Cannon St.	9.36 Ety.
Ety.	Rotherhithe Rd.	

No. 9

Brake Compo 2063

am		am
	Westerham	8.38 *
9.34	Cannon St.	9.36 * Ety.
Ety.	Rotherhithe Rd.	
pm		pm
	Rotherhithe Rd.	Ety. § SX
Ety.	Charing Cross	4.56 § SX
6.11	Westerham	

* Attached to No. 8

§ Attached to No. 18

On Mondays to be sent to Westerham per 5.10 am Cannon St.

No. 26

am		am
	Dorking	6.15 Ety.
Ety.	Gomshall	6.43
8. 6	Cannon St.	8.12 Ety.
Ety.	Dunton Green	9.17
9.27	Westerham	9.42
10.35	Cannon St.	10.37 Ety.
Ety.	Rotherhithe Rd.	

(This set worked back to Dorking on the 10.42 pm Cannon Street).

The brake compo on Working No. 9 would be detached at Dunton Green off the 4.56 pm Charing Cross to Ashford, and then presumably be attached to the 5.55 pm railmotor Dunton Green to Westerham.

SOUTH EASTERN RAILWAY JULY and AUGUST 1881

WEEKDAYS

	am	am	am	am	am	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm
CHARING CROSS..d	5 45	..	8 25	..	11 25	1 40	4 5	5 2	5 55	7 28	..
CANNON STREET..d	5 57	....	8 35	..	11 35	1 52	4 16	5 13	6 5	7 36	....
LONDON BRIDGE..d	6 0	....	8 38	..	11 38	1 55	4 19	5 16	6 8	7 39	....
DUNTON GREEN...a	6 56	....	9 28	....	12 36	2 51	5 7	6 9	7 3	8 26	....
.. ..d	7 0	8 10	9 35	11 10	12 40	2 55	5 10	6 15	7 10	9 30	10 0
Brasted.....	7 7	8 17	9 42	11 17	12 47	3 2	5 17	6 22	7 17	9 37	10 7
WESTERHAM.. .. a	7 10	8 20	9 45	11 20	12 50	3 5	5 20	6 25	7 20	9 40	10 10

SUNDAYS

am	am	am	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm
7 50	9 0	10 30	..	2 30	4 10	6 30	..
8 0	9 12	10 42	....	2 40	4 20	6 30	....
8 3	9 15	10 45	....	2 43	4 23	6 33	....
8 59	10 11	11 39	....	3 39	5 19	7 25	....
9 5	10 15	11 45	1 10	3 45	5 25	7 30	8 10
9 12	10 22	11 52	1 17	3 52	6 32	7 37	8 17
9 15	10 25	11 55	1 20	3 55	5 35	7 40	8 20

All trains 1, 2 & Parly.

WEEKDAYS

	am	am	am	am	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm
WESTERHAM .. d	6 40	7 55	9 0	10 50	12 10	2 15	4 10	5 25	6 50	7 40	9 40
Brasted..... a	6 43	7 58	9 3	10 53	12 13	2 18	4 13	5 28	6 53	7 43	9 43
DUNTON GREEN.. a	6 50	8 5	9 10	11 0	12 20	2 25	4 20	5 35	7 0	7 50	9 50
.....d	....	8 8	9 13	11 5	12 25	2 30	4 24	5 40	....	7 55	9 54
LONDON BRIDGE.. a	....	9 3	10 1	11 57	1 17	3 22	5 14	6 34	....	8 48	10 42
CANNON STREET..a	....	9 7	10 5	12 2	1 21	3 26	....	6 38	....	8 53	10 46
CHARING CROSS.. a	....	9 19	10 17	12 14	1 33	3 38	5 25	6 50	..	9 5	10 59

SUNDAYS

am	am	am	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm
9 45	9 30	11 25	11 50	3 25	5 5	7 10	7 50
8 48	9 33	11 28	12 53	3 28	5 8	7 13	7 53
8 55	9 40	11 35	1 0	3 35	5 15	7 20	8 0
....	9 43	....	1 4	....	5 49	....	8 7
....	10 34	....	1 55	....	6 33	....	9 1
....	10 38	....	1 59	....	6 37	....	9 5
..	10 51	..	2 12	..	6 50	..	9 18

S.E.& C.R. WORKING TIME TABLE July, Aug. and Sep. 1904

WEEK DAYS			C						SO	SX	SO	SX		SX	SO						WO
		am	am	am	am	am	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm		pm	am
DUNTON GRN ..	arr	..	..	..	7 15	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	dep	..	7 2	7 45	7 55	9 18	11 12	12 52	2 31	2 42	3 30	4 0	5 2	5 57	6 10	7 6	8 0	9 17	....	10 56	12 45
Brasted.. ..	..	..	7 9	7 52	A MX	9 25	11 19	12 59	2 38	2 49	3 36	4 7	5 9	6 4	6 17	7 13	8 7	9 24	..	11 3	12 52
WESTERHAM....	arr	....	7 12	7 55	8 10	9 28	11 22	1 2	2 41	2 52	3 39	4 10	5 12	6 7	6 20	7 16	9 10	9 27	....	11 6	12 56

B 5.25 am B. Arms Goods C Ety from Chislehurst A See note below

WEEK DAYS		am	am		T	pm	pm	pm	SO	SX	SO	SX	pm		pm	pm	pm	pm	Ety	Ety	
					am				pm	pm	pm	pm							pm	WO am	
WESTERHAM ..	dep	6 40	7 26	..	8 40	10 26	12 18	2 15	3 8	3 30	4 36	4 43	5 38	..	6 48	7 32	8 56	10 34	11 0	12 30	..
Brasted.....		6 43	7 29	....	8 43	10 29	12 21	2 18	3 11	3 33	4 39	4 46	5 41	....	6 51	7 35	8 59	10 37	11 15	....	....
DUNTON GRN ..	arr	6 50	7 36	....	8 50	10 36	12 28	2 25	3 18	3 40	4 46	4 53	5 48	..	6 58	7 42	9 6	10 44	11 25	12 40	....
....	dep	....	....	....	8 52	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	12 50	....	....

T Through train to Cannon St, arr. 9.34 am. Calls Chislehurst 9.12, Grove Park 9.17, London Bdg. 9.31 am.
D Goods to B. Arms, arr. 2.35 am. o Arr. 11.5 pm

S.E.& C.R. WORKING TIME TABLE Worked by Steam Rail Car July, Aug. and Sep. 1906

WEEK DAYS		B	C						SO	SO	SX	SO	SO	SX	SX	SO					WO	E SO
		am	am	am		am	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	am	am
CANNON ST.	dep	5 10	..	..		..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
DUNTON GRN	arr	6 8	..	7 15	8 52	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	12 30
	dep	6 25	7 45	8 0	9 17	..	10 48	12 50	2 40	..	3 23	3 55	3 58	4 55	5 5	5 55	6 6	7 6	8 0	9 15	11 0	11 35	12 46	12 46
Chevening Halt	....	....	7 48	....	9 20	....	10 51	12 53	2 43	....	3 26	3 58	4 1	4 58	5 8	5 58	6 9	7 9	8 3	9 18	11 3	11 38	12 49	12 49
Brasted		6 32	7 53	A MX	9 24	..	10 59	1 1	2 51	....	3 34	4 6	4 9	5 6	5 16	6 6	6 17	7 17	8 11	9 26	11 11	11 46	12 54	12 54
WESTERHAM	arr	6 36	7 58	8 15	9 27	....	11 4	1 6	2 56	....	3 39	4 11	4 14	5 11	5 21	6 11	6 22	7 22	8 16	9 31	11 16	11 51	12 59	12 59

B Ordinary train C 5.25 am B. Arms Goods E 12†15 am SO Ety. from Orpington
† Empty Coaching Stock.

WEEK DAYS		B	T						SO	SX	SO	SO	SX			SX	SO			WSX	SO	D	WO
		am	am		am	am	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	am
WESTERHAM	dep	7 25	8 38	..	9 42	10 24	12 15	2 10	3 3	3 28	3 42	4 34	4 43	..	5 30	6 18	6 23	7 30	8 53	10 36	11 19	11 20	11 30	12 25
Brasted		7 28	8 41	....	9 45	10 30	12 21	2 16	3 9	3 34	....	4 40	4 49	....	5 36	6 24	6 29	7 36	8 59	10 42	....	11 26	11 45	....
Chevening Halt		7 32	8 45	....	9 49	10 34	12 25	2 20	3 13	3 39	....	4 44	4 53	....	5 40	6 28	6 33	7 40	9 3	10 46	....	11 30	....	....
DUNTON GRN	arr	7 36	8 50	....	9 53	10 38	12 29	2 24	3 17	3 42	3†55	4 48	4 57	....	5 44	6 32	6 37	7 44	9 7	10 50	11†31	11 34	11 50	12†38
	dep	....	8 52	....	9 54	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	12 50	....
CANNON ST.	arr	....	9 34	....	10 35	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....

B Ordinary train. T Calls Chislehurst 9.12, Grove Park 9.17, London Bdg. 9.31 am. D. Goods to B. Arms.
A Brasted trucks to be taken on to Westerham, to be worked back by special trip at convenient time. z. Arr. 11.35 pm

S. R. WORKING TIME TABLE 10 July 1927 until further notice

WEEK DAYS

	Freight X	Freight			A							SO				SX					WO	WO
	am	am	am	am	am	am	am	am	pm	pm	pm	pm		pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	am	am
DUNTON GRN arr	4 10	...																				
dep	4 50	...	6 35	7 22	8 22	9 8	10 25	11 5	12 20	1 22	2 8	3 27	....	4 22	5 24	5 58	6 26	7 25	8 22	10 22	11 20	12 32
Chevening Halt	...	...	6 39	7 26	...	9 12	10 29	11 9	12 24	1 26	2 12	3 31	....	4 26	5 28	6 2	6 30	7 29	8 26	10 26	11 25	12 37
Brasted	...	5 45	6 44	7 31	8 30	9 17	10 34	11 14	12 29	1 31	2 17	3 46	....	4 31	5 33	6 7	6 35	7 34	8 31	10 31	11 30	12 42
WESTERHAM arr	5 10	5 56	6 46	7 33	8 32	9 19	10 36	11 16	12 31	1 33	2 19	3 48	...	4 33	5 35	6 9	6 37	7 36	8 33	10 33	11 32	12 44

A Worked with Engine at each end. X 2.45 am Hither Grn. Sids.

WEEK DAYS

	Freight				A						SO	SO	SX		SX	SO	\		Freight Y		WO	WO
	am	am	am	am	am	am	am	am	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	am	am
WESTERHAM dep	5 25	6 5	7 6	7 38	8 40	9 48	10 42	11 50	12 58	1 40	3 15	3 55	3 57	5 2	5 41	6 5	7 6	8 0	9 5	9 40	10 42	12 5
Brasted	5 30	6 9	7 10	7 43	9 44	9 52	10 46	11 54	1 2	1 44	3 19	3 59	4 1	5 6	5 44	6 9	7 10	8 4	9+25	9 44	10 46	12 9
Chevening Halt	..	6 13	7 14	7 46	9 48	9 56	10 50	11 58	1 6	1 48	3 23	4 2	4 5	5 10	5 48	6 13	7 14	8 8	..	9 48	10 50	12 13
DUNTON GRN arr	....	6 16	7 17	7 49	9 51	9 59	10 53	12 1	1 9	1 51	3 26	4 5	4 8	5 13	5 51	6 16	7 17	8 11	9 35	9 51	10 53	12 16
dep	....	..	..	..	9 52	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	11 10	....	....	....
CHARING X arr	....	..	..	..	9 39	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....

A Worked to Dunton Grn. with Engine at each end. Y To Chislehurst. † Arr. 9.15 pm

SUNDAYS

		6.30 am Engine to Depot					3.45 pm Dep'ture 4					9.45 pm Dep'ture
		am	am	am	am	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm
DUNTON GRN. arr	..	6	150									10 1
dep	....	6	155	7 40	9 38	10 20	11 10	12 35	4 15	5 40	6 50	7 30	8 40	10 6
Chevening Halt	....	..	..	7 44	9 42	10 24	11 14	12 39	4 19	5 44	6 54	7 34	8 44	10 10
Brasted	....	..	..	7 48	9 46	10 28	11 19	12 43	4 23	5 48	6 57	7 38	8 48	10 14
WESTERHAM arr	..	7	11	7 51	9 49	10 31	11 21	12 46	4 26	5 51	7 1	7 41	8 51	10 17

Empty trains (Weekdays) taking up Branch Line workings:

	am	SX pm
SEVENOAKS (T.H.) dep	7 54	6 15
DUNTON GREEN arr	7 57	6 18
	For 8.22 am to Wtrm.	For 6.24 pm to Wtrm.

SUNDAYS

						To Dep'ton arr 1.40 pm				To Dep'ton arr 5.25 pm	Engine to Tonb arr 10.56 pm	
		am	am	am	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm
WESTERHAM dep	..	7 20	9 15	9 57	10 45	12 14	1 12	5 18	6 30	7 8	8 18	9 0	10 25	....
Brasted	....	7 24	9 19	10 1	10 49	12 18	1 16	5 22	6 34	7 12	8 22	9 4	....	....
Chevening Halt	....	7 28	9 23	10 5	10 53	12 22	1 20	5 26	6 38	7 16	8 26	9 8	....	....
DUNTON GRN. arr	....	7 31	9 26	10 8	10 56	12 25	1 23	5 29	6 41	7 19	8 29	9 11	10 35	....
dep	....	..	..	..	....	....	1 24	....	....	....	....	9 12	10 40	....

S. R. WORKING TIME TABLE Mondays to Fridays 6 Jan 1935 until further notice

	A Freight	Freight	*		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	* WD
	am	am	am	am	am	am	am	am	am	am	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	am
DUNTON GRN dep	4 15	....	6 34	7 24	8 2	8 56	9 35	10 30	11 25	12 33	1 10	2 10	3 10	4 5	4 55	5 25	6 3	6 18	7 0	7 40	8 26	9 7	10 5	11 5	12 23
Chevening Halt	....	....	6 37	7 27	8 5	8 58	9 38	10 33	11 28	12 36	1 13	2 13	3 13	4 8	....	5 28	6 6	6 21	7 3	7 43	8 29	9 10	10 8	11 8	12 26
Brasted	..	5 35	6 42½	7 32½	8 10½	9 3½	9 42½	10 38½	11 33½	12 41½	1 18½	2 18½	3 18½	4 13½	5	5 33½	6 11½	6 26½	7 8½	7 48½	8 34½	9 15½	10 13½	11 13½	12 31½
WESTERHAM arr	4 35	5 46	6 47	7 37	8 15	9 8	9 48	10 43	11 38	12 46	1 23	2 23	3 23	4 18	5 6	5 38	6 16	6 31	7 13	7 53	8 39	9 20	10 18	11 18	12 36

A 2.40 am Hither Green. Arr Dunton Green 3.30 am. * Auto-train.

	Freight	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	Freight WX	Freight TSO
	am	am	am	am	am	am	am	am	am	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	B pm	C pm
WESTERHAM dep	5 5	6 15	6 58	7 45	8 37	9 14	9 56	10 52	11 52	12 52	1 52	2 51	3 47	4 37	5 11	5 46	..	6 39	7 21	8 7	8 47	9 47	10 47	11 35	12 50
Brasted	5 10	6 19	7 2	7 49	8 41	9 18	10 0	10 56	11 54	12 56	1 56	2 55	3 51	4 41	....	5 49	..	6 43	7 25	8 11	8 51	9 51	10 51	12+0	1±15
Chevening Halt	..	6 24	7 7	7 55	8 46	9 23	10 5	11 1	12 1	1 1	2 1	3 0	3 56	4 46	....	5 54	..	6 48	7 30	8 16	8 56	9 56	10 56	..	..
DUNTON GRN arr	....	6 28	7 11	7 58	8 50	9 27	10 9	11 5	12 5	1 5	2 5	3 4	4 0	4 50	5 21	5 58	....	6 52	7 34	8 20	9 0	10 0	11 0	12 10	1 25

B To Hither Green, arr. 1.35 am. Dep. Dunton Grn. 12.45 am. C To Hither Green, arr. 2.40 am. Dep. Dunton Grn. 1.50 am.
x Arr. Brasted 11.40 pm. z Arr. Brasted 12.55 am. * Auto-train.

B. R. WORKING TIME TABLE Worked by Auto-train. 12 June 1961 until further notice

WEEKDAYS

	Freight			E.C.S.				
	am	am	am	am	am	pm	pm	pm
DUNTON GRN dep	5 45	6 34	7 23	7 54	8 26	9 6	9 37	
Chevening Halt	....	6 36½	7 25½	....	8 28½	9 9½	9 39½	
Brasted Halt	..	6 41½	7 30½	....	8 33½	9 13½	9 44½	
WESTERHAM arr	6 0	6 45	7 34	8 1	8 37	9 17	9 48	

MONDAYS to FRIDAYS

														Freight					
	am	am	am	am	am	am	am	am	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	Repeat each hour until	pm	pm	E.C.S. * pm
DUNTON GRN dep	4 20	4 56	5 26	6 7	6 37	7 5	7 50		11 50	12 50	1 20	1 50		6 50	7 50					
Chevening Halt	4 22½	4 58½	5 28½	6 9½	6 34½	7 7½	7 52½		11 52½	12 52½	1 22½	1 52½		6 52½	7 52½					
Brasted Halt	4 27½	5 3½	5 33½	6 14½	6 39½	7 12½	7 57½		11 57½	12 57½	1 27½	1 57½		6 57½	7 57½					
WESTERHAM arr	4 31	5 7	5 37	6 18	6 43	7 16	8 1		12 1	1 1	1 31	2 1		7 1	8 1					

SATURDAYS

	am	am	pm	pm	pm	Repeat each hour until	pm	pm
DUNTON GRN dep	11 50	12 50	1 20	1 50			6 50	7 50
Chevening Halt	11 52½	12 52½	1 22½	1 52½			6 52½	7 52½
Brasted Halt	11 57½	12 57½	1 27½	1 57½			6 57½	7 57½
WESTERHAM arr	12 1	1 1	1 31	2 1			7 1	8 1

SUNDAYS A

		am	Repeat each hour until	pm
DUNTON GRN dep	..	7 50		9 50
Chevening Halt	....	7 52½		9 52½
Brasted Halt	....	7 57½		9 57½
WESTERHAM arr	....	8 1		10 1

														Freight						
	am	am	am	am	am	am	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	Repeat each hour until	pm	pm	E.C.S. * pm	
WESTERHAM dep	6 10	6 59	7 38	8 10	8 40	9 21	4 42	5 12	5 49	6 21	6 47	7 23	9 30	12 23	1 5	1 35	2 23		7 23	8 10	..	9 23
Brasted Halt	6 13½	7 2½	7 41½	8 13½	8 43½	9 24½	4 45½	5 15½	5 52½	....	6 50½	7 26½	9,0	12 26½	1 8½	1 38½	2 26½		7 26½	....	....	9 26½
Chevening Halt	6 18	7 7	7 46	8 18	8 48	9 29	4 50	5 20	5 57	....	6 55	7 31	..	12 31	1 13	1 43	2 31		7 31	....	....	9 31
DUNTON GRN arr	6 21	7 10	7 49	8 21	8 51	9 32	4 53	5 23	6 0	6 29	6 58	7 34	9 10	12 34	1 16	1 46	2 34		7 34	8 19	....	9 34

(Time allowance at Chevening Halt and Brasted Halt is 15 seconds, unless otherwise shown)

y Arr. Brasted 8.35 pm

* Until 21st October inclusive and again commencing 17th March 1962
A Until 22nd October inclusive and again commencing 18th March 1962

1927: The problem here is that while only one train was stabled overnight at Westerham, in the evenings there were two down workings for only one up. One can only assume that the two trains were joined at Westerham and worked as one back to Dunton Green, to be detached there – a common practice with an "unbalanced" timetable. Meanwhile the loco which had worked the day's services would very probably take the 9.5 pm goods, leaving the loco off the 6.26 pm Dunton Green to work the rest of the evening's trains. Then there is the unusual feature of the 8.22 am Down and the 8.40 am Up – shown as being worked with an engine at each end. Stock for the 8.22 am came up from Sevenoaks; at Dunton Green it must have backed on to the waiting branch train, which would be facing Westerham. The combined train would then have worked there and back, without any running round, and at Dunton Green the through London portion would be detached, leaving the branch portion still facing Westerham and ready to take the 9.8 am thence. Incidentally, as there were no run-round facilities at Brasted, the goods train working the 5.45 am from there to Westerham had no choice but to propel the goods brake van and trucks, and special instructions allowed this.

1935: A much more straightforward timetable, though less interesting, where the branch engine simply arrived on the 2.40 am goods Hither Green, worked the day's services, and returned to Hither Green on the up goods. No light engine movements are shown, so apparently there were still coaling facilities at Westerham.

1961: The final timetable, this is similar in most respects to the one introduced in 1955. It should be noted that after working the morning services, the stock ran empty to Tonbridge from Dunton Green at 10.20 am, returning on the 3.53 pm passenger from Tonbridge. On Saturdays, commencing 16th September, it left Dunton Green at 10.20 am but returned empty from Tonbridge at 11.17 am.

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